

Australia's magazine of the performing arts

March, 1979 \$1.50

Theatre Australia

Noel Ferrier on Musicals
Pram Factory Push
Robyn Nevin
Reviews



DEATHTRAP

Music by Don Gummer. Book by Terrence McNally. Directed by John Drouillard.

Tim Sharman
as
Patrick White

Theatre Australia celebrates its third birthday in August this year with a party at the NIMROD THEATRE in Sydney on August 6 and celebrations will be held in all major cities throughout the month. All details will be published next month.



Trent Nathan has designed a jumper made from pure new wool as part of our celebrations. It will be a limited edition and a photo of the jumper will appear here next month.

Martin Sharp has designed a special birthday poster incorporating every cover since August 1976.

There will also be ... T-Shirts
Binders
Badges
Back issues and so on

MORE DETAILS NEXT MONTH

The national magazine of the performing arts

Theatre Australia



March 1979

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COMMENT

Regional Theatre Programme — Another federal setback

Well over a year ago the whole issue of democratisation of theatre was raised in these pages. An editorial championed the importance of regional theatres. Tony Trentham wrote of the backroom problems, local politicking, and simple pressures that caused the Hunter Valley Theatre Company's problems, and Terry Clarke reluctantly claimed in the media of a second reason that pressurised the company had been a success in good argument but not coffee filters. For the more astutely successful Ryman's Threading Company, Terry O'Connell spoke of "The Multiple and Majestic Web," after objectively appraised his claims.

Now the Hunter Valley, under its second artistic director Ross McGregor, is facing out of the tubes for a third time, while in the Ryman's everyone is waiting to see if Dennis Johnson can repair and develop O'Connell's knock of making such production "a new little adventure for Ryman" (Wells) and picking them up.

Early on (1973) Ryman's had an even better, where in Newcastle the book of the became a major independent enterprise. At present with a depressing history and the likelihood of no more than three productions possible for 1979, a future has been established seemingly in conflict a permanency on the company that the past and the poor prospects do not altogether support.

Perhaps because of the uncertainty, what appears to be a woefully inadequately used HVTI and, intractable but reasonably plausible, between realistic first figures of roughly the last four years of putting the Carlton Sels Furyng to create the Northern Areas Newcastle in fact needs an audience size of about five hundred in a flexible space, so that what the HVTI has nothing in there other touring groups could use the venue. As it stands (and no power exists in here to stop it) it would only be suitable for touring high appeal one-man shows.

The thrust is not of Ross McGregor's choice or doing, for as show about his misgivings "what we are is no good — but what I feel about it is irrelevant, it's what I've got." Yet as one in one of the factors as things stand in preventing HVTI from performing throughout the year. Present calculations on The Club Culture and Services Areas (these figures a low overall of \$15,000 per show, which probably the whole \$72,000 subsidy they have (Barossa a heating at the doors by audience turned away, there can be little hope of more money this year;

though Ross is privately gambling that the might just happen).

The whole enterprise has got locked into rigid town politics, hierarchy and personnel issues, and in some areas downright competition tends. Yet, above all the squabbling and mistakes is the urgent and fundamental need for the places not just to shake out of the sales but leisure.

Already a derivative New Theatre Board (Australia Council) policy on regional theatre development has been passed. What it says is that the Board will only consider funding new provincial ventures (i) on the understanding of a three year cut off — it becomes commercial, gets too little booking, inగ least in 36 months, (ii) a maximum of 50%, and decreasing by 10% in each of the subsequent two years of overall needs, and (iii) a new application each year, anyway, until security is never assured.

Two points should be made: the obvious one is that this is a serious setback to attempt hopefully enough to begin on the long road to establishing a regional theatre. The second is that theatre in the provinces is in some pressing way considered to be of a different order than capital city drama. The resulting thing is that might well now be a self fulfilling prophecy.

A Board spokesman has assured Theatre Australia that HVTI and Ryman do not come under the policy although Ross McGregor appears to have been seriously worried about its consequences because of their having a first in the door before it came out. But even if they are safe, the door is now all but shut firmly that may attempt to follow, and then there comes a really all the more crucial.

However the Board is not the villain of the piece (though they did choose the area as a money saver and have a very questionable attitude to the regions but the overall economic left high and dry, which the Liberals are responsible about letting up).

Regional co-operation are a necessary next step in the industry's financial development, not as community theatres touring women's institutes and pensioners clubs (why should the account on this any more in second class than capital anyway?), but as professional companies hanging a standard of excellence in production, as only full time professionals can. Once that is established then is the time for the locality to add its own characteristic flavour.

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"QUOTES & QUERIES"



Robyn Nevin, Debra Ober and Michael Bateson in rehearsal for *Deathtrap*. Photo: Beni Heider

BACK TO ROOTS

MICHAEL BLAKE, *BLAKE IN MORE*, Director of Deathtrap.

Unusually I wanted to come out to do two plays, *Deathtrap* and *Private Lives*. Both have new books as if the second of these will be too expensive to produce. Deciding Deathtrap again here, after London, is for me a return to my roots. (Opposite left: Australia for RADA, in England in 1950 — Eds, but also bringing to Australia a ping I am sure they will like it as a marvellous thriller and not at all pretentious. I don't mind what plays I do so long as they are the best of their kind. There are The two books Robyn Nevin and Debra Ober look perfect for the parts — Ober is a comic actor capable of doing New York comedy.

As well as the play, I am not here for a number of reasons — some Deathtrap is still, rehashed and running. I shall be staying on for a little while to explore with a producer the possibility of a film I want to make.

I have been offered on the Sydney State Theatre (partially directorial) job but, at the moment my career is still in England. Remember that I was with an organization the National Theatre, for five years and have only been free from it for a couple of years — but that's the way I want to play for the moment.

Certainly I am not averse to working in Australia but I will not be applying this time but it comes up again in a couple of years.

NFTW PLAY TO TOLK

LEILA BLAKE, Artistic Director, Blake Australia Productions

"The company which has recently presented

my play *Fever*. For three at the Ensemble at the studio, prior to London production, is pleased to announce the following cast — of particular interest to Australian playwrights:

Concurrently in April, 1979 Studio Australia will begin a series of readings of new plays under the direction of Ross Fitterer to be held weekly on Sunday evenings at 7.30 pm at the Kewdale Neighborhood Centre, 18-22 Parry Street 6061. Playwrights are invited to submit full length unproduced plays — preferably with a maximum of five characters — in Ross Fitterer, MTC Hastings Peninsula, Bondi NSW 2026 (Enclosed stamped addressed envelope for return of unused manuscripts).

The major purpose of the play readings is to find a pool of sufficient merit to tour overseas under the aegis of Studio Australia. To writers in America and Britain Australian actors cost in such a tour would receive Equity salary (traveling and living expenses), and the author would receive a negotiated royalty.

The secondary and by no means less important function of the readings is to present professional actors reading new plays which might otherwise escape the attention of producer, director and publishers.

The play readings will be announced the previous weekend in the Sydney Morning Herald Australian Columns and there will be a nominal audience charge of \$2.50. Coffees and light refreshments may also be purchased at the Neighborhood Centre."

MTC'S MACBETH

TANIA McCALLUM, MTC, game designer.

"It's great to be back! I had gone to England to train as a designer in London and to work there. Having done exactly that over the past eight years I was given the fabulous opportunity to obtain the return to Australia with a contract to work with the MTC. John Sumner and I met in London and started work on *Macbeth* in September 1978.

Designers in England work in many different kinds of theaters with a huge range of directors, actors, budgets, conditions and staff — moving freely between the National Theatre and tiny pub theaters while maintaining their own approach and attitudes to their art. This allows for experiment and demands responsiveness.

The designer's work develops directly from the text, through the director and actors and then into the practicalities of the construction of the particular theater and its facilities. The text is the pivot, with the knowledge of director, designer, and actors producing the "team of theater" with an audience. The particular theater in this instance is the Athenaeum in Melbourne and the local Methodist John Sumner

MTC technical director Peter Bowden and I talked in Lincoln about the nature of the stage and its relationship with an audience. I hope we have found a way of using it that will make visually, but simply maintaining an absolute clarity of text and performance.

The text is clear and fast — indeed following rapidly upon one another and Shakespeare tells us constantly who everybody is and where they are. We don't need to repeat these details visually — rather reveal the text into the third dimension — distinguishing and exposing the backbones. The set becomes a statement of the world in which the play exists — the concrete and subconscious, the natural and unnatural good and evil. The atmosphere, mood and tone of the play is given definition by the text and played by light and sound.

The actors need to move with speed and agility, they need to feel in one with their choices.

Additional garments worn as costumes to denote a hierarchy or family status, or an animal's colour and social characteristics.

These ideas are just the beginning. John Sumner the actors, and I now have to compound them into production. The first discovery begins when rehearsals start and all departments jointly consider their energy, and the text becomes alive on the stage.

FOR GENUINE INTEREST

JOHN LITTLE, MATT Marketing & Production Manager

"What is happening in the Trade? It is a question often asked of me — sometimes with a genuine interest and other times uninterested by a passing glint.

The most real in the public eye is the entrepreneurial department and promotion. Both are currently involved in *Antarctic Force* going to Broken Hill, Cobar, Bourke and Melbourne before May, plus *Crown Metropolitain* to Canberra, Tasmania and Melbourne before April. *Snowmen* the Adult Fanta play, a still running in the Seymour Convention Centre taking off for Adelaide, Canberra and Perth in the next three weeks while a drama search takes place for appropriate and suitable venues in Melbourne and Brisbane.

On 26 February Coonoo Risks and Full seventeen pieces certified in performances a national tour lasting all of ten days, to Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Broken Hill and Bourke. Coming up in May is the Trust's presentation of *A Month of French Wine* produced by the State Theatre Company of South Australia at the Seymour Centre.

Please let me know if you are considering establishing a theatrical drama company at the Trust. Our May run was created to take the on



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NOISES OFF

Final
Review

CASTING ASPIRATIONS

I think Morris and Shattock are the most agents based in Sydney. They are known as Morris and Shattock - well I suppose it would be pretty silly if they were known as Smith and Jones. Late last year they (Morris and Shattock) did as well given the job of casting the *Three Australian Comedy* made by the Seven network.

This passed a few problems as Morris and Shattock (the agents) and Morris and Shattock (the casting consultants) are one and the same if would be a bit difficult for Morris and Shattock (the casting consultants) to keep confidential information away from Morris and Shattock (the agents). Following me so far? Good. So when as independent agent placed Morris and Shattock (the casting consultants) and asked for a break down of the cast they found that they were not allowed to have this information. However Morris and Shattock (the agents) already had this confidential information but Morris and Shattock (the casting consultants) had not broken their confidence with the producer by divulging this information to an agent (Morris and Shattock) as Morris and Shattock (the agents) are the same people as Morris and Shattock (the casting consultants).

Now that I have cleared up the little problem, I hope you all understand that there are no theatrical agents in Sydney named Smith and Jones.

LITERALLY TEMPERAMENTS

Consequently we are told, the following Theatre Companies have secured grants for playscripts in residence. State Theatre Company & A.L. Ensemble (NSW) La Mama Theatre (Vic) Little Palace Theatre (SA), Repres. Theatre Company (NSW) Tom Ugly's Roaming Theatre (NSW) Schubert Theatre Company (East Theatre) & The Town (SA) Australian Performing Group (Vic) and National Theatre (NSW). I asked the same question who held the Tom Ugly's and when on such a hot subject! Well... Tom Ugly's Roaming Theatre can be found at the Northern Community Touring Theatre which is part of the Cross Roads Community Care Centre (Vic) where can we expect to hear from these Theatre Companies since whilst the QL Literature Board pour plenty of our hard earned cash in it for the world fails to start using their results.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION?

Recently I had the audience to see *Demolition* at the Ensemble Studio in Neutral Bay, Sydney. The play itself was a total and the young actors left me the Studio as a

platform for they (young) certainly showed some promise however the direction or should I say lack of it was appalling. I enjoy watching any theatre whether it is good bad or indifferent, but to be subjected to a fight scene in which a dog of large mass ate a dinner in the form of two characters, in public is considered immediately followed by a chair which comes crashing through the top of the table and the two land on the floor of the Studio with head chattering mouth, is a bit much. You might say that the aforementioned series of events would not normally bother the average theatre goer - I agree but when you are sitting in the front row as I was and get splattered with tea and the bones that were chattering with the crash of the table over the ones in your seat you tend to get a little disinterested! Theatre is nothing a bit improved when you have to include dry cleaning and like repairs.

THE IRIMORAL KB

I have always thought my middle name was William and I spent about seven minutes inside the Village Cinema City Theatre (as the Producer of *Grease* directed it) *Money Money Money*. Now I am certain it is *Superiority Money Money* a little money. It has everything you would ever want in a film: violence, sex,唱歌, sex, violence and lots of death and blood and colourful things like that. There is however, one more than I find a bit hard to believe in this score Ed Devereaux's scenes must put that sounds that John Wayne did in *The Cowboys*... and John Wayne didn't want

Village Roadshow hosted the party after the film in which we enjoyed a glass or two or three of good South Australian wine, but having paid our through a film full of bloody gun shot wounds and severed toes I felt the cocktail cocktails and tomato juice was a bad choice of supper.

ETCETERA

Apologies to the Australian Gas Light Company (known as A.G.L.) and to their General Manager, Mr Maurice J Williams by our blunder in the December issue of TA, we referred to the Company as A.G.L. painted Gas Light as one word and called them the oldest commercial company in the country. They are in fact the oldest existing industrial company in the country. Known as A.G.L. and Gas Light is two words. We have made a mess of that didn't we?

Mario's Last Wolf (Marin) runs for one hour? and is directed by Mr Graeme Blundell as the press release says... best known as *Alien Purple*... I'm sure Mr Blundell has much better credits than this and must be getting a lot of the AP stage.

Sir John Mills apologetic to Miles Welsh on our line not being able to stay very long as he had to catch a cab to the State Royalroad Show.

It was suggested to a Village Cinema City representative that it would be a good idea to purchase an air conditioning system for their complex... we've got one the official explained. *Answers letter later* Turn page

A A

gricks
and bedding bags

ROSE GARDEN
MAGNETIC RIBS
Wool

LAST LAUGH

AN EIGHT BY COOLWOOD
BOOK FROM KELVIN FLETCHER

Illustrated by *Franklin*

Ray Stanley's

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



Something of a record for a play was created when nearly 300 people applied to be audience members at *Zounds*. Possibly the fact director is Michael Blakemore was the attraction. However, this has been topped by applications from more than 500 to play the soprano in the Sydney season of *Aida*, which opens at Her Majesty's in the end of May.

Ham Fodder Heaven is coming our way or the you to divert away from the MTC — and the whispers in the bars is well is, Bert Joseph's *The Abduction*. After her tour in *Clothes Horsewoman* will June Belcaro play the title role in *Phantom*? Universal in Hollywood have been putting out feelers to sign up Angela Finch. Apparently the proposed tour of *Petromax* or *Family* has been cancelled. It presented too many problems.

They say Bert is trying to do the same but a new stage show entitled *Suspension*. The Musical Wonder what happened to that much-vaunted version of *The Phantasmagoria* of More Done in was supposed to be working on? Yvonne Horan who made such an impact playing the lead in the MTC's *Time of Carnival* opens the Last Laughs Upstairs Bar And Venue worked on the Last Laugh for a year as a waitress! So little Miller seems another Australian this March 1988.

Did you hear that story about Oliver Reed passing through the Immigration Department in South Africa which he was to make a film and an immigration officer saying to him: "You thin people had better watch yourselves. Remember that if you're caught making love to a black gal you will be given life imprisonment." To which Reed replied: "Can I be given life before while I'm actually doing it?"

Veracious publisher Sean Blower is to describe the Edgley office at Melbourne as far as he can to opposite the Edgley publicity machine at Broadway Cross back soon. And, talking of publicity people, Lynette Tetheron who has been in charge of publicity for Melbourne's GTV 9 for the past two years, has just left to join Nine. Her last assignment is an *Tony Gorman's* vampire film *When Anyone Walking to the Lyceum* a six-weekend venture for \$1.5240.

Top marks to Cliff Hacking Express for one of the most attractive and alternative programmes seen for some time for the rest of

the year. Last night at the Australian Capital City, the audience was surprised to be informed by the writer who had opened the play, out of stage areas and混杂 with patrons in the foyer! Who would Maria Callas have had? In Newcastle's late night TV show Review, likely to go national? Locality it's being referred to as "The Love and Live Show", as it's on hosted by Lucy Wagner and Louise Penridge. The lessons of *The Two Brothers* on Sydney and Melbourne should be other will come.

People now like Diana Rigg's on stage even over all the impact for writing made on me was enormous. The first time was in the BCW production of *Two For The Seesaw* for which she won the Best Actress Eric Award for 1980. Her latest is in Michael's *Afternoon Heat*. Another recent catch was that of London theatre critic, biographer, and writer Alan Dent the book in James Agate's biography. Dent's only connection with Australia was that he arranged the Shakespeare anthology *The Five All-Fair Poems* which George Watson and Ruth Mitchell toured here in 1964.

a recent first night in our Australian capital city, the audience was surprised to be informed by the writer who had opened the play, out of stage areas and混杂 with patrons in the foyer! Who would Maria Callas have had? In Newcastle's late night TV show Review, likely to go national? Locality it's being referred to as "The Love and Live Show", as it's on hosted by Lucy Wagner and Louise Penridge. The lessons of *The Two Brothers* on Sydney and Melbourne should be other will come.

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A record likely to stand at Abbotsford for some time is the record back-to-back seasons they had POMs and the APCT of *Dreadnought* and Derek Ninoara at POM's *Not Sure For Sure*? which together took over half a million dollars. By the season end the Ninoara piece was playing three matinees a week but still people were turned away. And who holds the record for takings for one night at the Opera House? It's still POM's *Dreadnought* for the record concert there presented by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. Box office takings totalled \$13,992 which was \$3,000 more than the previous record set for a *Samson Down By Cooper's Creek* in 1987.

Soon likely that Ron Hallbeck and Ruth Cracknell, trained together in *Babes in Toyland* will play the Human Coconuts and Babes in Toyland roles in *The Old Game* in Peter Williams' *A*

LETTERS

Dear Sir:

Was looking forward to reading David Williamson's *My Life and Times in The Big Apple* (TA, January, 1979) but then I saw in the first sentence we find the past not to be that at all. It's yet another instance of the obsession about critics.

Only one of his 2400 paragraphs dealt with other writers, me in particular and the new title for *The Club*. Both could have been more interesting if expanded again.

Welcome home DW must be so glad that travel hasn't affected your writing.

Best wishes,

Frances Kelly,
Brisbane, NSW

P.S. I notice this letter may seem critical but it is just to make him feel he's having strong friends.

Dear Myself,

I am engaged in researching the history of tape shows in Australia and would be pleased to hear from anyone who worked with the shows or people who have reminiscences of them.

If any readers have photographs, manuscripts, playbills or any other mementos of this form, I would be pleased to cover registered postal costs both ways to have the opportunity to look over such material, and assist in its safe handling and return.

Yours sincerely
Robert Page
TA Editorial Officer

Dear Sir:

I refer to January '79 edition of Theatre Australia and the feature WA section.

Colin Offiters in his critique of *His His* states that Perth audiences have not seen Peter O'May live before the show.

Surely if a person is a theatre annotator then he should have the relevant facts correct when writing such statements, or do we believe only 10% of what we glimpse through?

John O'May was last in Perth while appearing in *Twelfth Night* at the Royal Theatre.

If that does not jog his memory, perhaps he should consult *Adelaide* and the Lyceum papers for information.

G.L. Plummer
Perth, W.A.

58

May I a great member of the theatrical profession. We met nearly forty years ago, manager director and all round critic in the Old Country who has for the last twelve months had the great pleasure of reading "down under" wrote to say how very impressed I am with the

enlightened standard of theatre in this country.

This too has grown older by a year since I arrived, and, from a foreigner's unbiased point of view I should like to take this opportunity of paying with your theatrical men of letters in lauding those who have given me the most pleasure during my stay here in Spain. This also does not prevent me to write all so I have stayed for publication here above where performances shall remain forever etched in my memory.

One must remember with the British and especially with these two grandes dames of Australian Theatre, Mrs Frances Kennedy and Mrs Shirley Constance for their outstanding performances in *Miss Favar* and *The Glass Menagerie* respectively. The many accolades amongst the younger talents will place to this *Action for All Seasons* Miss Robyn Nevin. The departure of Miss Juler the newest Regency of Cleo in *Black Comedy* and the timeliness of her *QTel* in *Brook's Cross* — what an arrest! Nor can we forget Miss Kate Flanagan. Her indolent Cleopatra in *The Merchant* the glistering sophistication of her performance at Fremantle surely after this she is the perfect choice for *Bunty* copied by the sparkling comedy of *Adelaide Face*.

Now the persistent Pest man come Mr Michael Page whose subtle and witty performances in *The Bee* I consider the most under-rated of the year. But he is not the standard device to grace the Sydney stage. This accolade must be awarded to this Prince of Comedy Mr Peter Rylands for his much acclaimed performances in *The Cat* and *The Comedy Bedroom Face* and not least for last — dare I say — state worthy status in *The Abduction*.

The most promising young actor of the year? For me it is Mr Neil Astley that young Beacon of Australian Theatre for his enthusiastic contribution to *Brook's Cross*.

One must not, however, in his enthusiasm for these and many other magnetic performances deny the duration the laurels that another Sir Pringle's is become. I too have read the same path that I did that Sir Peter Wharham, impression and Director par excellence must be my theatrical father of the year. Family with such and encouragement he will become Australia's own Balon Boucicault! And how delightful to see *The County of Clare* through Australian eyes, as imagined at the recent Trevor Nunn production much modification. Please Mr Bell!

Lucky but by no means less, came the playwrights — the names and foundations of the British, who show "the very age and body of the nation's form and present". The largest bouquet to Miss Hewitt for her witgiving and reflecting

poetry *President Choi* — as earlier as Brisbane but with the lyric tenderness of an Edna St Vincent Millay.

Onward to 1979! And what an exciting year this promises to be! The much awaited internationally flavoured new Sydney Theatre Company — the realisation of the existing initiative, *Play Theatre Company* and the promise of future mounted subsidies for these deserving little theatres like the Q Theatre and *Verandah*. So for the old year "our endeavours are ended". But these pages are not so cerebral. They have moved and accelerated in all. May they "have not a crack behind" ! Assuredly not!

Yours faithfully
Walter Flugge P.E.M.
Woolloongabba, Qld. 4102

Dear Sir,

State theatre companies are quite often on the receiving end of criticism from other sections of the community.

I would like to stress that this is by offering through your columns congratulations to the Queensland Theatre Company TA issues.

These groups — one primary, one secondary and one for remote areas — visited throughout the State of Queensland in a touring period in 1978 from May to the end of November, travelling a distance 10,000 km.

They reached no fewer than 77,500 children in 401 performances and what is more to the point in all of this activity distance beat and beat, our one scheduled performance was named a considerable achievement in the tradition of professional drama.

Brava QTC!

Yours faithfully
Peter Dorn
Administrator
Queensland Arts Council
Brisbane, Qld.

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I owe you Sydney a profound apology.

In my profile of the *TA* (December 1978) I quoted her as saying that her maternal grandmother worked with Edith Evans in the first production of *Shane's Barn*. Of course any dramay knows that the first actress to play *John* was Sybil Thorndike. A check on the taped interview I had with Ms Flugge confirms that she named the correct actress, the error in the text being therefore entirely my fault. My deepest and public apology is for any giving the impression that she did not know her theatre history.

Colin Offiters
Neathwick, N.S.W.

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SPOTLIGHT

Thoughts of an Uncultured Philistine

NOEL FERRIER

For the record this philistine does not write for the rest or the decline of straight playhouse presentation in Sydney. I rather I do not want for the lessening of government support for the already established drama spaces or theater companies.

What this philistine would like to see is a last go for the much despised and much spewed classical art form — the MUSICAL. Along with some consideration for that great mass audience which never goes to the ballet, the opera and only occasionally to the classic that turns up in their thousands for the latest popular musical offering. (And it must be said that even in their acceptance for the latest unoriginal musical offering, a set fee which can be imposed legally for the ticket-takers and drama artists).

Perhaps by the way it have received after some coverage I have had in the press and radio about writing, I do seem like the curmudgeon.

GENERAL PU BLK. — Just about 200 per cent of focus.

MEDIA. — Generally regard my arguments with some sort of indulgence even though one general interview related to me as an "uncultured philistine" and so he related like the poor demented balloon we all know him to be.

SAY PHOTOS. — Soon clearly divided on the main depending of course on whether they can sing and act or just act?

The one amazing fact has remained itself — EVERYONE for EVERYONE has thought of the idea first, and some months ago at that, and was just about to make a public announcement as to the effect, so there!

I did in fact put the idea up a couple of years ago in several small sites where I & Williamson were being game out with the decision making but to no avail — even though there was one of the most unique theatrical setups in the world — websites, websites, writers going back to Street Of Dreams staff and a chain of theaters.

No royalties, prints, reader, second hand cast



though I may be florid on my proposals

- (a) The establishment of the First Australian Musical Theatre Co — purely GUARANTEED by commercial and Public/Govt funding
- (b) The total aim of the company to be self supporting — to aim for a profit — the main criterion to be run on a completely COMMERCIAL basis — to generate its production into every revenue making area available always providing standard and were not required
- (c) The company to operate on a repeat basis performing three or five seasons annually with all capital costs
- (d) If based in Sydney the company could be called the Sydney Music Theatre Co — thereby providing Sydney with a highly organized professional vehicle when the company visits the other states
- (e) The company to operate on a 50/50 guarantee against loss split between government and commercial enterprise
- (f) Each production to have a commercial space who would receive a return for his 50/50 com partner full promotional marketing and administration in sync with the production he was producing
- (g) The Federal or State governments to take up the remaining 50/50 com partner against loss for which they would receive the acclaim of the many thousands currently being denied any worthwhile musical production policy
- (h) This will free the financial responsibility being evenly shared by both parties and EACH GETTING their pound of flesh in return for little or no pay out. Initial setting up costs would be the responsibility of the government body which would be repayable over the company get into a profit making situation
- (i) The board of management to comprise only the heads of departments in the company with a rough money man type as chairman. The usual band of professional board members, that come and go like boudoir and the notorious going-around (however who runs up on many of these ads often should be avoided)

There is a lot of excellent hard working, creative talent who genuinely love the theater and in particular the musical and whose experience goes back many years, from whom we could establish a thoroughly efficient and conservative management

Spotlight

- ④ To actively DO something about giving an international standard Australian musical off the ground and to investigate and evaluate every Australian musical writer since Gifford's time for possible production.
- ⑤ In due course to establish a National 3 company to tour the country cities, with producers already done with the main company.
- ⑥ The appointment of a first-class marketing, promotional and PR man who would sell the project with the same energy and enthusiasm as Coca Cola or McDonald's campaign.
- ⑦ To appoint Miss Her Majesty or the Queen or the Captain in Captain of Her Majesty or the Princess of Melbourne.
- ⑧ To attract the FAMILY back to the theatre by keeping admission prices to a minimum because we would not be charging a huge profit margin.

The success of musical material is almost intuitive — just about every famous composer and lyrical hat — at least one musical piece writing to be done again — our musicologists always abbreviate, cut down, lighting, blocking, backdrops and kind of music people wouldn't and we couldn't, are equal to the best in the world and we have the STARS.

Here are a few suggestions that really spring to mind:

THE KING AND I Starring RACHEL ZOELLER PHOTOCO — NANCY HAYES NEIL WARRENSMITH

JUKE A SURPRISE JOHNNY PARTRIDGE

THE MIGHTY BROWN — GRAHAM KENNEDY AND CO PROJET FLYING CITY — or a musical version of the phone directory — JILL PERRYMAN

SHOOTOUT — VIVIANNE STEELE BRUCE BARRETT

ASPIRE — BARTHOLOMEW MURRAY PAMELA CIBBONS GERALDINE MORRISON

ROUND OF MUSIC — JULIE ANTHONY SISTERHOOD PARISLOW

THE MIGHTY MUSO — JUNE BRONWELL, MARY LE COEUR — NANCY HAYES BARTHOLOMEW JOHN

HANTE HORSE INN — EVERYBODY THE CHIN CHIN CHORUS TO, unnamable NOEL PERRIER

42 FAIR FAIR — STUART WAGSTAFF, KAREN HENDERSON, DAVID GELBRECHT, BRYAN BART JOHN

ABOVE THE LAW GUY JILL PERRYMAN BRUCE BARRETT

AND THE REST OF HAIR JESSE CHRIST SUPPORTING CHARLES LANE, PETER VAN DER BOOF ETC ETC ETC ETC WHICH was a great show!

Philosophy had occurred though I may be I and many thousands like me would pack out a theater and never see any form of live of those attractions — I would even go and see myself in *One Chin Chin*. Philosopher Under The Age of the Musical is here.

STATE THEATRE CO., ADELAIDE. Programming and Policy: Guthrie Worby

This article is to be the first in a series which will investigate the programming policies, ideas and ideals which characterize Adelaide's theatres. Hopefully by the end of the year it will be possible to look at the proposed drama content of the 1980 Festival Of Arts in the light of the community's preparedness for it — in the light of the community's exposure to a spectrum of philosophies and practices.

I propose here to look at the State Theatre Company's policy and programming rationale and relate these to prevalent notions of interculturalism and standards.

The State Company is faced with a number of intersecting and inherent obligations. It must continue to serve its established audience, establish an audience for and for the longest of the next three regular seasons and programme accordingly. It must build a company of artists especially young actors — who always will be the cornerstone and nucleus of professional and public attention and with developing their craft or more clearly to encourage especially that city and country are served in most of the areas of its activity. It must avoid overexposure to the Flashback yet be an identifiable necessity. The founders of a great historical tradition in order to delineate its identity.

The theatre internal manifestation of an attempt to satisfy these multiple demands on its company's programming. Basically the State Company cannot do all things for all people. Through its privileged position when possible the public is invited that, in order to control the tendency Colin George the Artistic Director had adopted a basic policy of presenting classics and new plays. This allows The Festival Centre Trust to provide a model of the usual metropolitan and the semi-professional laboratories and theaters to extend the horizons of theatre audiences.

Likewise in the current or latest rather than looking back according to George's preference it is best for himself and Mr. Ross, the Director of the State to establish and the various Alisons.

Thus, Peter is obliged to mean contemporary work from somewhere but especially Australia. Mr. Ross' role as company has to be as a believer in his own Mummers American Model of becoming the public's culture. He has other obligations to meet for the season in view of Contracts, Mutual of Derrick Barker can import, play *Slaughter and The Diet*. The last of these obligations and the down, the consequence results in what might be called "postmodern" programming.

From which it seems the Company's most immediate is an ever widening scope between "classical" and avant-garde works



Cleo Maldonado — developing talent

Audiences in search of a complete closed theatre look from stage to screen at two to from the same company to see whether the company is improving in its capacity to cope with its chosen method of operation. The company should also be assessed in its task of building young actors like Michael Berry, Chris Malbon and Colin Heale for the future. There is for example a quite specific place behind Berry's progress from well over a decade ago through Peter Green and Pontefract, to Hamlet. As Colin Heale points out the most crucial part will be the performers.

Ellie makes mistakes about programming without saying but George says this is an environment which the former would flourish yet one should not be bound in inflexion. It must also be acknowledged that in the view of the company's audience seem to determine that a lot more money can bring about an improvement in service and efficiency. In effect all other demands (for example Romeo) will be the balance. In early 1979 the full company development and hopefully artistry. The rough and ready of last season's work will surely a remember need Hamlet's play will fulfil the script requirement. The Malediction is a popular past with historical links in Australia's early theatre history, and Shaw's

Continued on page 24

Michael Siberry

— An actor to watch

John Edge

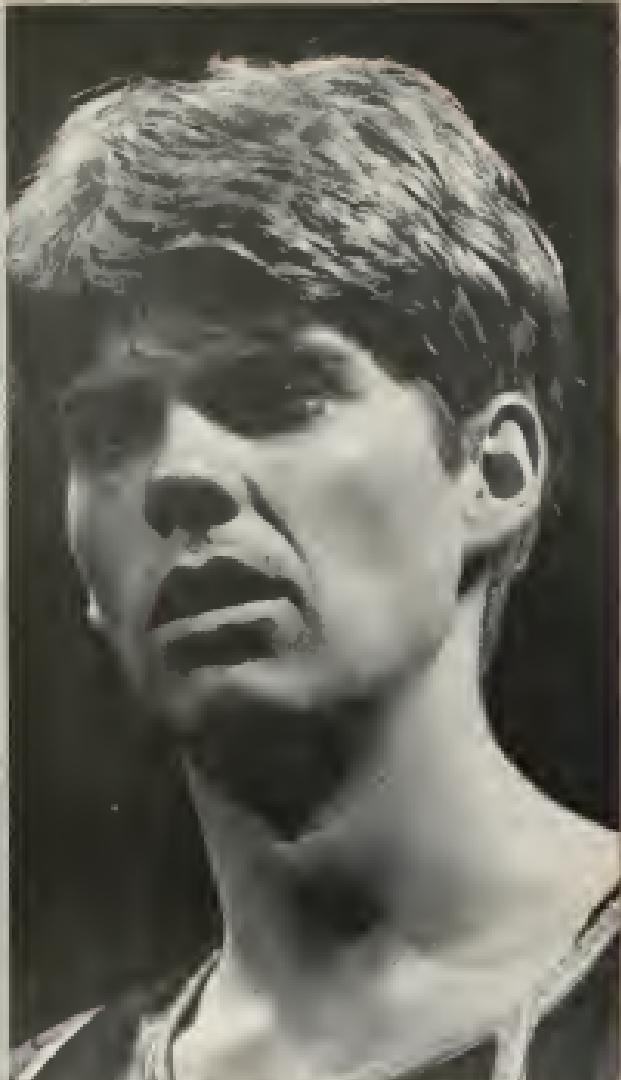
At 23 and with just over two years of full-time theatre work behind him, Michael Siberry is already an actor to watch. Which is exactly why many of us will be closing our mouths when Colin George's production of *Hamlet* for the State Theatre Company of South Australia comes to The Playhouse. For Michael Siberry is a player Hamlet.

His involvement in theatre goes back to his childhood when he worked regularly with the Tasmania Youth Theatre during summer vacations. In his Merchant status year, he secured a part with the Tasmania Theatre Company in a production of David Rabe's *Seven Days and Seven Nights*. The experience of working with professional actors so excited him that he decided about a year and a half later to make the move. He went on to NIDA, graduating in November 1978. Those followed a tour to a Chichester Theatre Festival in Wales, with the Australian Youth Performing Arts Association, and then, in January 1979, he joined the State Theatre Company of South Australia, to which he is still connected and based this year. His credits with the company include *School for Scandal*, *Murder in the Cherry Orchard*, *Julius Caesar*, *One Day One Night* (*The King and At Colenso*, *They Shoot Horses Don't They?*) the impressive performance here as Robert Speranza Marr in *A Measure of French Writing*.

Colin George's casting of Michael Siberry is bound to prove an interesting choice, but was hardly a surprising one. Several of the roles he undertook in 1978 — Hal in *Weary All Posthumous* in Chichester; and Young Peer in *Reign Giant* — can be said on hindsight, almost to have been preparing him for the part of Hamlet. They revealed a young actor with the vocal presence and intelligence to do justice to the part.

He admits that he's glad he hasn't had the foundation for the part with Hal and Posthumous. Although he has had varied work with the company, and claims an option to leave it clear that he has found his work in classical plays more rewarding because more demanding. "That early play (*Skins and Bones*) was very funny — I was always confident like the colour'll always go to the classical parts especially Shakespeare. I found myself at a loss, for me, being Hal and Posthumous taught me to think about the characters involved in classical theatre. Especially when you work the language, you're trying to give make sense of it for an audience. I had to struggle with almost everything I did last year."

The struggling has obviously helped him because he appears very well charged by the



Michael Siberry in STC's production of *Hamlet*. Photo: STC

part of Hamlet. In *Hamlet* Siberry is sure it's more difficult than Posthumous. "Posthumous was the best written part and the play's such a mixture of ages. It was never really one of myself there. With Hamlet everything runs the race, and you can make such perfect sense of it, in my own terms, and in terms of today. Hamlet himself is so lost in thought. The language is wonderful — you feel off such a privilege to be able to speak it in plays now."

What sort of Hamlet will Michael Siberry produce? Talking to him about it, I felt that he was unwilling to embellish about the character too much or name up with just, easy definitions. As the stage of production has, the pressure isn't fully on, and much of the real work of discovery is still to come. His read *King's Shakespeare Our Contemporary* is impressed with Kent's arguments about the relevance of the play, and believes that there is much to do

Spotlight

mer that can speak to contemporary audiences. He's excited about Colin George's transcription of the play in a Vietnamese setting. "It's going to be a very formal, more less-of-personal. The sort of world where you have to watch everything, you say what it's difficult to act freely in favour." The transposition of actions will help mediate Hanlon's obscurism — that of a young man from the relatively free and questioning atmosphere of the university who is forced to understand himself by powers and limitations far to rely on his own judgment, or an accommodation where pride and dishonesty prevail. "But I wouldn't know or watch a film of the play as need too much about the character. If you did, it would take away the freshness of what I can bring to the part."

Treading his own pathes and discovering what is unique to himself are important to Michael Selsky. The desire for identity, honesty and self-continuity lies at the core of *Hanlon*. His way of self-expression, however, wavers and wavers about maintaining his own performances. "Doing the things that come easily to me, that I tend to repeat and recycle, so that over, just becomes a bit the same." He's could see what his shortcomings are. "I don't think I'm courageous enough, don't see many parts of me. Sometimes I think I just stand around waiting for inspiration to strike, and while I'm waiting I just stretch the words."

Looking to him, I was struck by my changes in perspective. He obviously copes well what he does and is satisfied by this continual discovery that each new part brings. When he speaks of Shakespeare — especially the language of poetry — he recognises that this character is forced to a constant eye-opening in him. He can't help growing a little lyrical over the eloquence and beauty of the language in *Hanlon*. Along with that enjoyment there is an increasing awareness of what he does know — experience, book, lesson and learn from the work of other actors. I think of your enjoyment through your love from others' work. Even a bad performance will contain something only a student perhaps that is unique to that actor, that makes one of us that person learn from.

His concern extends to June, and his thinking of new fields — perhaps overseas. He's enjoyed his time with the company, and will warmly recall the power feeling within a bunch of which he can relate no Colin George. Although it's actually a very large company, he's managed to create a relaxed feeling within it. As a director he brings so much experience, like his gift to negotiate and negotiate very patiently. And I'm very lucky for he has such faith in me that he could do more for me.

There will be many, I think, who will hope to see Colin George's final justified optimism right. If his past work and general approach to his profession as anything to go by this much in common, whenever else he might be, Michael Selsky's *Hanlon* should prove lucid, intelligent and honest.

Brisbane Actors' Company

Richard Fotheringham

1979 is shaping up as the year to break new ground for the Brisbane Actors' Company for three reasons. The first is that what started in late 1977 as a group of actors putting on their own production of *Moby-Dick*, The Abominator because other work was not available, has become a registered cooperative company, taking on employ in permanent year of performances. The second reason is that the Actors' Company began with aspiration towards that first production and has since undertaken actually less, dramatically and sometimes, less successful productions. In 1979 they are going to have to provide us with at least one major production that is very good indeed. The third factor that will help or make or break them is that day, the political spotlight has gone when the Queensland Government was casting about for an alternative to the fast-winking Twelfth Night Company. One year suddenly there is a fairly new Twelfth Night under the aegis, direction of John Wilson and Billie in the Hall, which has stalled the vacuum created and made the battle for rapidly popularity names and audiences very tough indeed. One of the arguments against Twelfth Night continuing was that the QDR had alienated the general public market and they, wasn't even for another company coming to similar audiences. Can a third professional company, without major subsidy even think of surviving?

The philosophy behind the Brisbane Actors' Company is that of its founder and artistic director, A. Peter Smith with major Australian companies for some years. David Lonsdale has clearly not found satisfaction within such institutions. One reason — shown by his choice

of place, and his production — is that he is a former French licensee who has worked in the theatre in Paris and his philosophy of theatre derives from classical French drama. Plays of the old Actors' Company, produced, or far have been of plays by French authors (Moliere, Racine, Corneille) because the productions have never been all presented with circumspect attention to detail and all adopted an extremely minimalist approach to the scene. Please me that is only one right way to do a play and — this is in the play itself, some of it doesn't and in other perspectives. In the Moliere refit I didn't see theory and practice apparently combined together as in the more recent French Moliere. *Lover's Melancholy* it was evident still, albeit in more raw supports, with the uniformly rugged and Chaucerian in design, design and leading actors standing immobile, looking white, in folds of the draped round the edges. The company aim "to encourage all the various talents, of the members of the company, and in particular, an atmosphere seems right at variance with this one man torquemard."

The other factor which makes this company odd is that some very good actors who make a living outside the profession have offered their services to the Actors' Company without accepting a salary. Their leading lady Jennifer Hawley, is one such amateur/professional, a mother of dual children who committed to her work but who is unable to take on a wage rate in most Actors' Company productions. This position (and our analysis perhaps) is currently causing headache for A. Peter Smith according to his committee administrator, Brian Paul O'Gorman. Despite many of enormous the growth of our group, equally difficult to get us on an employed of institutions and the "so-called" Companies like the Broken Pulse, and others operating on such an ad hoc, and probably erratic, basis. It is Brian's view that we are getting full salaries than we will says Brian Paul blandly and has written on the group's prospectus the company takes lots of us were small till last summer again, which was only 1978 to the financial year 1979, which is how much I had thought and how muchactical thinking has gone into our administration there.

Encouraging new year and gradually all in the general to try to Brisbane, that's what motivates the Actors' Company. They have done good work and are very determined and enthusiastic. Their plan for 1979 — accompanied by the now leaving David Lonsdale and Michael to be given direction by David Adams from Twelfth Night — suggest that the company is aware of the need for change and growth. It is an insurance now, and the future is, although, for they are going to the place



David Lonsdale.

Robyn Nevin



ROBERT PAGE on our "Actress for All Seasons"

Robyn Nevin has just finished playing Miss Decker in *A Cherry Soul* to almost unanimous accolades for the devastating virtuosity she brought to the part. On March 14th *Dreadnought* (J C Williamson's) opens at Sydney's Theatre Royal, prior to a national tour, with Robyn in the role of Myra, a rich Newport American. Her stage husband, a middle-aged playwright, is played by Dennis Olsen; Michael Blakemore is coming out from London to direct.

On stage Robyn Nevin is a striking figure — at the part of Miss Decker in *A Cherry Soul* elegantly casting a spell through all the class and too decked out in ornate ripe red spats, swirling stockings, amorphously spreading torso and an indulgent lunch which evinced at the matinée she'd let it all except the energy for delineation, a vegetarian

Earlier last year we last saw her as the young Miss John, her aristocratic bearing brought low by the common denominator of sexual activity on a breeding instrument and And the year before, Nevin's adolescent Cleopatra proved her a creature of physical beauty affording the maturity of a powerful position which it seemed a two-in-one she could body up comfortably in odds with

Actually Robyn Nevin is between the two extremes of age, slightly beyond and thereat. Off stage the striking figure is left behind like the character themselves. In the flesh she is demurely, possibly, wanly, entranced with the mass of thick black hair, flashing dark eyes and those expressive yet childishly proportioned hands suggest an actress. She is self-effacing about her looks but is usually a handsome woman.

It is really only in the past few years that she has become a starwoman, as the matinée of female leads at the Old Globe. Yet her experience spans twenty years, beginning with the very first NIDA work in 1959, drama (and off) the stage

for the next eighteen years. Even while a schoolgirl she knew that an acting career was "meant to be" — and played the basic in fairy tales dramatised by an enlightened headmistress on the roads of Australia's inland country theatre the Royal Hobart.

The entry to NIDA and graduation with that first group of students were like clockwork, but then an immediate journey with the Trust (represented) the real world is not living up to expectations. Interestingly in that period she encountered Zoo Caldwell in *Permit Wilson's The Man Funeral* but she "didn't have a clue about his work at that time", and with defensiveness "I was not as involved then". Permit Shakespeare on lengthy country tours confirmed her prior suspicion of theatre as pretence. And stages a part in the prestigious production of *Poems again with Zoo Caldwell* at the lead, at the 1962 Perth Festival, she quit.

For four years she moved back to the Hobart of her school days she was born in Melbourne as an occasional presenter for the ABC. Her characteristically reticent attention to her work is marked by rare loose remarks in that period. From there she went to London, now married, and for three years suffered a somewhat bleak existence. Some work was taken up at "off-shoots" as Hoppy for the probably sum of seven-and-a-half pounds a week.

Her return coincided with the break-up of the marriage but now Hoppy was also a daughter to

consider. It was back to Tasmania then she met Ben Crispington. "The first person I had ever known who seemed to be doing things the right way — presenting plays logically and clearly influenced by the discovery of the tool of the mind and that had been missing for the last ten years of her professional career, the word back to NIDA and a role in *The Legend of King Pendragon* (King O'Malley) 1970."

That was the starting point for the second phase of Robyn Nevin's career — and the road to the full public recognition that *Dreadnought* will undoubtedly bring. The intervening years saw her working in *The Crucible* (1970) when she was "immature — but in costume", according to John Gutter "like a bonus" at the Festival in 1971, the Pythian Playhouse through 1973 and playing Shakespeare's *Comedy* in the 1974 Australian Festival. Then back to the Eastern States for roles at Fremantle and June 81 for the remainder of that year 1975 saw her in the controversial *The River* (1975) (see *Sally*) the only previous exponent of virgins and the film *The Fourth Wish* and *Castles*. Robyn was beginning to take off in a big way. It was confirmed when she won Best Actress NSW in the 1976 Drama Awards, for her portrayal of Blanche in *Streetcar* and *Carrie* (Prizes in *Scarpers*).

The journey has taken her through two marriages and a different personal life. Has this had its effect on her career? She begins by

"theatre should always be a devastating experience for both actors and audience."



NobbyNavBar as Miss Docktor in *A Cherry Soul*

Photo: StuartLaprae

answering that her approach is more "informed and intellectual". But she wants with an overall expression that through theatrical finds ways to realize it. Never having been cynical she has always the extracts in Miss Docktor played roles very different from her own personality. She reflects again on the suffering and consoles that personal experiences helped at her time of surface and be used in a theatrical piece. NobbyNavBar who also never abandons herself in a role but her ingenuousness, powers of observation and memory allow her to remember a gesture or facial expression made in life and then cast it in the creation of a role.

There are few signs in this long journey to being not just on top but one of the best theatres in the business it takes many years and hard work to develop the right's craft and for her to repeat it. Those started but "immature" performances of five years ago. If she feels something between pity and annoyance at the unexperienced young things who are given elegant positions by the institutions under a roof because they have no opportunity to explore them or prove their apprenticeship and are consequently often snatched up into typewriter roles which may never to shake off.

Her attitude is that of one of the most prominent names in Australian theatre. That commitment puts her on the committee of the Playwrights Conference, well some stage manager in the infant Hunter Valley Theatre

Company because she believes in its importance and did last year once her life was threatened with the star crossed Picnic Company. "It showed that there were people involved in the theatre who were angry and bored with the way things stood.

That anger and boredom was directed to large measures against the Old Town. Yet many who heard her on de vilour against the collapsed company which had over kept her centre stage, thought her ungracious. Her reply goes firmly but without a trace of self glorification in that she presents in fact that she did an enormous amount for the Town. At the same as she points out she always negotiated with the rest for the parts and that there she battles against the attitudes prevalent in subsidised theatres she can make always reflect subtlety for the change of needs.

She believes strongly that at a certain stage in an actor's career a point of acceptance should be reached and that he publicly deserves just recognition of their individual or circumstantial basis should reflect that. Again it is not a matter of self promotion. Of utility could be raised to a proper status in the eye of the public, that would do a lot of a lie for the church? Her response is one of incredulity when people will ask what she does for a living and when told think of acting as some kind of hobby practiced so I'll go enjoy a cigarette. She does not want the Town to be right and what do you do for hobbies or passions — it's more a kind of regard? One

ploy of working with Williamson's is that that comes automatically from them as part of their media operation.

Her main hope for the NSW State Theatre is that it will put more emphasis on assembling an ensemble of the best actors possible with even a system of auditions on the lines of the Royal Shakespeare Company in England. The location is concerned would be enormous. First and foremost an identity and style — something not fully established in the National without an ensemble. The quality of work could only improve the longer people worked together and the necessary apprenticeship of younger actors would be served in the best possible circumstances. The public would identify with the actors and feel involved in the development of the company.

If the new company manages to escape falling into the old ways of the state Ralph French will be back to play his part as a establishment. What else does the house hold? A TV series is being written for her later this year and in the moment she is in rehearsal for Bleeding Her first engagement with a commercial management.

Given her commitment and views about the theatre — that it should be a devastating experience for audience and actors — why this? Fair left technique is against the sugar factor — the play can be devastating in its excellence and should be worth Michael Blakemore directing and Dene Oberon the male lead.

ANTHONY BARCLAY reports

Saturday First Preview

Rohyn Simon, at pool games at a little restaurant, follows Jim Sharman through the day's events in the *Church Theatre*. It is Saturday afternoon. "We should be allowed to have some doubts," Jim says. "It's not human not to."

"They disappear when it's thought travelling on his own while leading Rohyn's merry chase, Jim immediately disappears, smiling, somewhat gleefully.

At other precise doubts Rohyn, as a rather relaxed mind, questions the "doubts." She was not angry but admits she was anxious — "We all used to have doubts, and I was concerned about Act One but Jim said there was no need to worry." Jim Sharman, one quickly learns, gives by his smile a patient calm, an unshakable confidence that can at times prove to be unnerving. Rohyn's doubts deal specifically with her portrayal of White's most strenuously off-limits character, Mrs Docker. And to her, of course, with doubts like a way of wrestling with the role.

"Most people find it difficult to portray a character that has a terrible gall for predominance but is also a victim and a source of her own poison for goodness and love." (Act One) Kinski White calls for a compliant and docile humanity that runs against the grain of any constant or grotesque non-morality. Rohyn knows this and has fought before agreeing she can be women. But then maybe she might not be too concerned.

Patrick White has kept a watchful eye on things and has anticipated such superstitions in "defensive production" and "electrifying moments." On Act One he sits in opening night. "A world-class production."

And those are the powers of the converted and one can be certain both play and production will elicit a very mixed response. Indeed, progress might suddenly find through the layers of 11:15 pm like seismic shocks and one overheard whisperer: "I liked the production but not the play." Martha Rohyn was right? Maybe, the production did as far exceed content — but then serious theatre should stimulate, irritate and provoke.

Friday Before the Preview

I am knocking with Jim in the Committee room and he seems quietly confident. The previous evening friends of the cast had been invited in to make up the first formal audience. "It was about time," Jim tells me. "Rehearsals were getting a bit stale — especially the second half and what the cast were over-familiar. We agree that the man was unconvincing. My reservations were that Act One was not done and lost much of its intensity. Act Three, particularly the Church Scene, lacked poignancy and thematic clarity. Act Two, though, I found stirring. It had moments unmatched in Sydney theatre for years. Yet a number of people had left after Act Two and the

Jim Sharman directs Patrick White's most challenging play.



"Tonight a Sydney curtain will finally rise on *A CHEERY SOUL* and a season that heralds the newly evolving Sydney Theatre Company will shake fifteen years dust from this most imaginative and challenging of the White plays. The approach may, I warn, be a little confronting."

— Jim Sharman

"... it's not long before one senses a kind of obsession, a shared obsession with Patrick White's vision..."

though crossed my mind that as many that feature of realism and symbolism would prove unpalatable and cause might see the work as derivative, banished! The obvious question, then, who was in *A Cherry Soul* largely proposed for the Teat's York Theatre 28 Season and then by the Park Company?

The answer "I've always wanted to do it and it is the logical follow on from *Seven Stages*" clearly *The Seven Stages* at Sampson's was very successful and could be seen as a way of preparing audiences for *A Cherry Soul* — a more obviously fragmentary and poetic drama if immediately accessible and aimed at visitors. The play is, like *Seven Stages*, White's most dramatic piece and it is not long before one detects a kind of obsession, a shared obsession, with White's vision — there is an openly allusive "conscious fulfillment" in being instrumental in the realization of interest in White's drama.

This obsession deals with the problem of locating an alternative theatre in the heartily all-in together back-slapping song and dance *musical* that has been in the "style" of our theatre from the gold reefs to the present day. The musical is ultimately and obviously an anti-climax, a comedy masked by a tragic pathos sense of its own commodity. Yet we add no further dimension whatever very much of the "western" people are really in search of themselves. Myself that tradition of theatre has seen as "dope" in relation to the security of involvement — so I pose the point again: "What this is now asking for the first play of the Sydney Theatre Company's Western Season?"

But what unanswered. He adds by answering that the idea of a "World Season" of six plays produced by the major Sydney companies is reaching everyone gets a go and audiences will be exposed to a wider range of the "best" some, I permit, not best parts of *A Soul* which, for example the All-red Sampson's stage, which strikes me, possibly, indicating the later "theatrical" form replies to the transformation in "last twenty years" — mostly that of *A*

which never changes his character.

This was, I thought, one of Sherrin's main achievements in *Southern Stars*: there was a lot of humanity coming through. He is enraged by the brutal response of Brian Thomas's shiny clothes line as symbols of empty suburban conformity! And in posturing much that is attributed to White's consideration of suburbia he believes that while White condemns conformity the people themselves are not condemned, merely represented. It is the audience pre-conceptions that condemn the characters and, indeed, some of the odd figures in the Sandstone Home scenes on opening night seem to reinforce this view. The point is, however, that White himself has stated he wants to discover the extraordinary behind the ordinary, the mystery and poetry which alone makes bearable the lives of such people and exceptionally myself. "Conscious or not, it is a call for dredging up events."

Jim continues that he does not draw stock from the theatre in the sense of scrutinizing other productions. He draws stock from as many areas as possible and gets them to lie there as representations of life — hence the humanity. The show sounds perhaps a little pale at first but when one looks at *A Cherry Soul* it begins to make a lot of sense. Jim wanted his actors to work against type and saw it as an objective, representational performance. This involved not of a lot of discussion during the *Pilot* season. The actors wanted to re-examine their role and the level of their contribution to the production.

It didn't with *They Just* but with *A Cherry Soul* the actors were able to contribute their responsiveness only to their performances but to the overall understanding of "the play". To this day I mean the style of playing "permitted the actor to be intelligent, articulate and able to reveal their observations of the society around them. Indeed the only work outside the art was directed towards a more perceptive observation of detail in human behaviour." I thought that in every one of the Sandstone Home scenes where the actors avoided stereotypical work on the old ladies, Jim is very definitely against the actor working too close to self and as played about the possibility that the cast has adhered to the possibilities that he contributes partly to accident and partly to "hard work". Of course the "— and trying of roles also helped."

"about the idea of Kotzen playing and the twelve other actors in fairly old skin. This avoided a

consideration — retrospective and it seemed logical to carry it through all concerned for the *Premier*. Miss , is the developing character and it seems right the eyes of the Characters. Miss Lally (by Whigham's) over the plays three acts. However the character must move, through Miss Docket, a speaking development that moves away from realism to a semi-absurd representation

stage. This is essential to achieve White's meaning without muddling.

The smaller cast also serves another function for Jim. One of the reasons behind the production was to establish the play as the repertoire of one theatre. This approach makes it conceivable in budgetary terms for companies unable to mount large one productions. He notes too that the World Play Season at subsidized at considerably reduced finance from other subsidised State Companies. The cost involved in mounting productions in the Drama Theater times of relevance is the business operation of the other family' scale that has and should a Company emerge out of the Season the financial elements would need to be considered.

Music, Design and Acting

Cameron Atkin has worked with Jim on two productions — most recently on the film *The Night of the Possum* based on Whigham's first score play. This is Cameron's first live stage work and he finds it rather more challenging than the rig and dry of television or film. The music for *A Cherry Soul* includes the unusual pieces — possibly pre-recorded. As well piano ballads from the '20s, '30s songs that the cherry girls were raised on. Sherrin and Atkin have revisited nearly all of the original sound cues and Sherrin's latest set on stage at the grand has some music for the church work to provide some links and to play Cameron's separately functioning melody that opens Act Two.

The music functions like the use of music in the play, for example Miss Docket has a number of bad teeth, on stage a generous amount of ice cubes on the floor whilst she and Ethel score more dancing or journeying far from an empty job. The concept is interesting. Peers interlocked into a running positive action round. The music was designed to remain subservient to the acting performance. Cameron says that in working with Jim nothing is forced, what is allowed to gel.

The collaboration has been so successful that there are tentative plans to escalate the work into something approaching an opera!

Brian Thomas flew back from New York on one week's notice to design for *A Cherry Soul*. He spent the next eight at Bush's place reading the score with director, each carrying three or four parts and with Brian's knowledge to get out a combination of and routes. (There can be links to qualified others with the use of a shadow). Jim feels it is to be along with Whigham's direction the best use of the Drama Theater space (*Lower Depths* and *Aboriginal Doctors*). The broad concept is an evolution, enclosed space therefore maximum expressive space that comes down to a subtlety for Miss Docket's final song. It works. When I last saw Kotzen Haven took both hands to audience and walk from Peter Carroll's stage

"Everything in his own power", it was one of the stand-out moments. Brian tells us that Patrick Winter's descriptive writing is as formal as not to be interfered with and here (in the set, centre the action of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a representation) rather than symbols.

These *Antony* scenes are back stage ("Antony's created stageline") says Brian and Cleopatra like curtains on clothes have come in focus, or wind. The furniture is grey-blue, stark, and serves for many functions, the scene moves a stage during *Mark Antony*. One of the earlier items — to have the actors moving up and walking onstage — was scrapped and now they sit left or right of stage moving in showers, or towards the end as showers, or wind sound effects. Simply there are no costumes at all.

Brian has looked over his shoulder over eight years now, including *Supernatural*, *Queens* and *The Devil* and is certain that the evolution of director/producer relations that is one of deep trust. "One has complete freedom working with Jim," says Brian.

Peter Carroll is working with Ann Shasman for the first time, it is also his first experience of the somewhat imperious Drama Theatre. He finds the short administrative and technical role of stage supervisor overwhelming compared to with National where "it was all on the family."

Added to this Peter found the large stage and distance from the audience involved necessary adjustments in his acting. But these potential drawbacks in his performance have been overcome and Peter has found working with Jim "a marvellous experience". He agrees that Ann is a better designer and releases all money — and that during a rehearsal period involves keeping a costume art many things. But maintains the early rehearsal good mood as the production moves forward: this can be the acid test for young or inexperienced directors.

Peter's sense of apprenticeship relationship is clear enough. He wants to know exactly where he should take the part "Tim Sherman" he adds "knows more than most directors exactly what he wants. He suggests what had earlier occurred to me." Tim has shared with Patrick something of an obsession: a hunger search of Australian drama.

Rufus Norris's main fear after the *Sweeney* preview is that in *Act One Miss Doctor* it is unclear to (I hate to say it, but who else?) Dame Edna. I thought that to be free of uncertainty during the Thursday run but she seems to be moving in the right direction now. Life is weird though that if the part is cast usually in these terms, the audience will not allow it to develop in *Act Two and Three*.

Rufus has worked with Jim on many occasions and in a fitting that the play Miss Doctor starts two years after he wrote the show with her Colette Paget in Jim's *Season*. The development of character from Colette to Miss Doctor is as ambiguous as it is complex, but one feels it will be one of Rufus's great joys. *Peter* (Continued on page 54)



Rufus Norris, Garry Marshall, Anna D'avalos, Rufus Norris, Paul Beding and Peter Carroll. Photo: Hyatt Carter



Rufus Norris as Miss Doctor braces the winds.

THE Pram's NEW Push

1979: The Year of The Thaw — or motels in China and Shakespeare at the Pram.

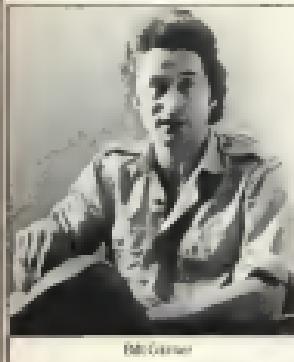
A discussion between Suzanne Spunner and Fay Mokotow (Chairperson John Hawkes, Bill Garner, Max Gillies, Wilfred Last, Terry Maher and Richard Murphet of The Australian Performing Group at The Pram Factory.

The January 1 issue of *The Praemateur* references a year of change by The Australian Performing Group and announces a new line of events for 1979. It consists of a new economic policy and a thematic and strategically based programming strategy for the coming year. Whether it is — as Les Radic diagnosed in his Age article summing up the year in Melbourne — that "old copies no longer work" — the

The new Australian play is no longer their preferred genre. David Williamson has moved up if not on local theatre and writers have become the former's antithesis to Anglophile models and everywhere they speak in the round and not in the voice of Eric Pevsner. Where does this leave the group — impeded on their own rusty speckles? Not at all, rather back to their fundamentalist role as conservers and disseminators of radical theatre of form and content. Having trashed their way through the bourgeois deficit the march can begin again!

Sally Whittle was staged in the Front Theatre and at Pram Factory series had high profile production costs so the fact that a guaranteed small audience exacerbated the cost of year financial deficits. On the other hand took smaller casts, and hence more cost-effective productions directed by women in the Back Theatre — Betty Dwyer's *The Star Train Of Love*, Fay Akar and Fay Mokotow's *Power* attracted capacity audiences and considerable critical acclaim. Similarly Richard Murphet's excellent, sobering production of *A Light Shining In Darkness* was sold out in the Back Theatre. All three productions could have reassured the move to the larger capacity Front Theatre as Back To Books' *Seven* had done earlier in the year. Clearly there were lessons to be learnt from these experiences.

1979 also saw the emergence of two new writers — Barry Decken and Philine Montefiore. Decken could be described as an individual who



Bill Garner

conservator from within and without in that 1979 was not one of the APG's best years. However the most productive approach to the successes and failures of last year is to reflect upon the contradictions, problems and new directions which became evident.

Of the stable of writers whose names have been associated with past APG success stories, Barry Oakey's *Sally Whittle* was the only production emanating from that formerly fervent and hot Elsternwick audience "blown away in colour", whereas five years ago it may have driven in equal droves those same people (indeed it was an old recipe and one which the APG promoted) — a responsible, heterocultural, subject given a bold, sensuous warmth and interpretation, replete with bodily physical comedy and lively, non-verbal expression. Leaving aside the merits of it as a piece of writing, why didn't it grab the APG audience of today? Largely I think because the APG has carried out an original brief and has had a profound if unacknowledged effect on local theatre.

1979 also saw the emergence of two new writers — Barry Decken and Philine Montefiore. Decken could be described as an individual who

he was the first Literature Board sponsored APG playing cooperation with *Poachers Hotel* while Maherwell is a collective member who has worked with Nightrain, Block, where he had a number of short visits produced at La Mama (which, interestingly, Dennis Tuten Dowd was part of independently in the Back Theatre earlier in the year) an extension of the role played by the APG via von La Mama.



Fay Mokotow

Lindsey Smith's Nightrain group produced Maherwell's *Dreamers of The Absolute* and Maherwell's chilling *My Father Speys Now* in the Pram Factory as well as other readings and events outside the intentions of the Pram Nightrain is one of the many sub-groups which the APG has spawned over the last few years. Of these *Sally* is still operating, but independently of the APG and the Circus On recently joined forces with students from the Victorian College of The Arts as a macabre Big Top event in the grounds of the National Gallery. In addition there are numerous groups operating under the umbrella of the APG, all in drama Factory Productions — *Dialectics* and radio (CBR and JARR) all of which contribute to the vitality and diversity of the group as a whole.

Well that was twenty eight — a year that got better by fits and starts, and in August with three Tours in the Back and *Poachers Hotel* in the Front really looked as if it was going to make off its finally founded at the end of the year with *Sally Whittle*.



Sally Whittle

What then of devolving power? A commercial company faced with the same scenario could easily have decided that the only maximisation possible would be to press the extremes of the expense of the actual and potential diversity. Fortunately for all of us the APC is not a commercial company and while finance is the lack of it absorbs a lot of the group's time and energy, real subtlety for them results in political and aesthetic considerations as well as financial survival. Their solution is to expand the available funds as widely as possible to encourage and maintain diversity while simultaneously ensuring that the success/failure of one project cannot jeopardise the choices of others.

Peter Molaison explained that the New Economic Policy (NEP) creates a strategic approach that no show whatever is the back or front will exceed a specified date. He said that the choice was between a small number of fully subsidised shows or a larger number partially subsidised.

Even within this parameter we're decided to subscribe some shows as a loss leader and



Breathless star Penny Von Katz

move to an even lower status, which correlates with the use of the Back and Front Theatres, but because that is unlikely to be a great a gap in resources — people can, advertising one between the shows in those spaces.

This means that there will be two categories of shows — fully funded and semi-subsidised. John Hussey added that the policy is about reducing the risk that the group is a whole loses and the real difference will be in terms of people's personal incomes. Funding in effect will only cover the cost of a show to get it in progress. The reason that once my show is put into rehearsal and the project manager sees that it is going to cost more than the season allocated or exceeds in fact more than that, then the risk will be taken by the people actually working on it rather than by the APC itself.

The difference between the fully funded shows and the semi-subsidised projects is that the APC is providing greater acting up costs in return for which they place a ceiling on the amount of money anyone working on them can



make — Equity minimum. Whether in the new audience project where the APC has provided less money there is in theory no limit on what people can earn. The shows not only meet the self-management goals of the collective but in audience practice in Trump and Discreet groups Richard Blundell added:

The project groups themselves sit the larger responsibility — choosing the shows and acting as an audience, which gives them more control over their work and a greater interest in the outcome of that work.

When the APC began it necessarily worked at the very bottom because the collective was small, but in recent years it has grown to the potentially uncontrollable size of between forty and sixty members as the only practicable political solution to the cell structure. Max Collier added that since the collective became so large it has taken the group a long time to find a centre. However Bill Gitterman explained that the APC still maintains the overall control and the power to decide which shows are in the program. "For example this year the collective has decided to provide more employment opportunities to women and we are in a position to do what we can to enforce it."

Richard and Fay explained that that you women's consciousness would be the centre informing the choice of shows. While this may at first seem a limitation on programming, Richard added that they were re-examining if a theme has led in fact, to more common choices being made. You feel you have deeper and further for emotional and morally, more confronted with a number of possible scripts in

both sexes in choice and makes for more imaginative choices." Willow East explained that the basis of positive discrimination creates sexism, that this not only has to be simple representations for women as characters and actresses but also that the writers must treat present women in a sexist or stereotypical way. Fay added:

It is a positive and creative step as well as a real ideological step. Suddenly it brings a lot of play to the tradition of our consciousness which we've ignored before. For instance to be addressed our visiting director Anneke Neumaier had her meant that he has researched a number of existing possibilities — and one thing which he may direct is *Internal Bonds*.

Among the plays the APC has accepted for presentation in 1989 are Stephen Sondheim's *Present Laughter*, Stephen Frears' *My Fair Lady*, Alan Bennett's *One Man, Two Guineas* and a musical about Shostakovich's life. In addition there are several political experiments which hold dual with unusual political expertise. They also explore the consciousness of women within their stories.



Sue Stephen

Productions of *The Dining Of The Stars* and *Shane* which are planned with Jennifer Hartley directing, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* based on the positions of marginalised women, and Sydney Brenner's *Four Girls* directing. *Shane* reflects on the psychic conflicts of women of different social classes. Other possible shows as yet not finalised are *We Can't Pay? We Must Pay!* by the Indian socialist writer and actress Deepa Mehta which recounts the battle between bureaucrats and the experimenters over young girls which has taken place in India in recent years, and a promising long and short show by local musicians and writers the Cossacks, called *Awaking In Love* (apart but).

Richard Blundell explained that the role the group is taking a concerned citizen to watch out over itself though, whereas in the past it has had a tendency not so much of buying right under a decision but been made to do a play, often by which was a win-win situation.

We are moving away from dealing mainly racially with stereotyped views of Australian society and history — moving on the one





An exultant debut A CHEERY SOUL

KATHARINE HERBONAGE

A CHEERY SOUL by George Wilson. Directed by Trevor C. Morris. Presented by Sydney Theatre Company. Opens Saturday 19th May at the Michael Fowler Centre, Sydney. Main Cast: Michael McElroy (as Captain Sloper), John Doherty (as Mr. Brewster), Karen Hodge (as Mrs. Brewster), Pauline McElroy (as Mrs. Brewster's maid), Anne Birrell, Miss Eddie McEwan, Ursula Gammie (as Mrs. Brewster's maid), Sue Belshaw (as Mrs. Brewster's maid), Penelope (as Mrs. Brewster's maid), Sue Belshaw (as Mrs. Brewster's maid), Pauline McElroy (as Mrs. Brewster's maid), Karen Hodge (as Mrs. Brewster's maid). Production designed by Michael Copley. Stage Manager: Alan Pinnell.

Photo: David Moore

The World Play Season of the Sydney Theatre Company which this year replaces the Old Lady Theatre Company at the Sydney Opera House, has had an excellent debut with *A CHEERY SOUL*, production of Patrick White's *A CHEERY SOUL*.

It brings a fresh slate of optimism and of vision to the drama theatre, if proper, not a faint assertion of "world standards" but the related confidence of work which takes its quietude for granted. The heat of anxiety which makes one wonder endlessly why we tolerate the Old Dame for so long.

There is no question that *A CHEERY SOUL* is a difficult play — a conditioning one, as Shakespeare's. Its subject is perhaps history and its place even captions without clarifying. In the production sense of the playwrights did not under the grade. But no one goes about it from the level of encyclopaedia. We shall see how it handles it in the most serious and commanding performance Sydney has seen since Cedric The Power Days in 1977 and for my money the former production Jon Sherman has ever done.

Firstly let us talk about the play. It comes upon the scene, however haltingly, of Mr and Mrs. Constant, a converted middle-aged couple who take life for granted and talk along without much imagination. In a kind of nostalgic gaiety ("I wonder if it's right to be always happy"), she remarks sanguinely, in the wake of tales of carousal death and destruction the couple invite Miss Docker, a homely pensioner, to share their all. She arrives — founders herself over should say upon the unprepared innocent. Like the tulips and the rocking chair that accompany her, her huge impetuosity drives their nonconformity.

Miss Docker does good. No one at Sherman still does so much good as Miss Docker. People are hereabouts of Miss Docker's goodness whether they like it or not. In no time her present inhabits every corner of the



Sydney Theatre Company's *A CHEERY SOUL*. Photo: David Moore

household. And she and her son, a retired cellist, in the Sundown Home for Old People. So much for the first act.

When the curtain rises on Act II we have left the cosy parlour and the play opens out into an expressionist doorway where old women in black dresses, like the relatives in *The Moon Funeral*, stand silent, stolid and form a chorus of silences against our human journey onwards through the light.

Miss Docker has already created Sundown Home. She is congenitally as she was in the Constant household as Miss Hobbie says. She's only been here a couple of days and her name books in my head like a ping! She converses with Little, a stoatish, slightly queer whose ardour but speed limit humiliates Miss Docker, carries unwillingly into the grave. Memories return — we see her death has hastened and the awful revelation when Miss Docker, after momentarily descending from the carriage, is deserted by the need to eat after sex, bearing a mass of tissue so when she has done good in her love leaves her in the dust.

This is the turning point of her inextricable spin. It is followed by a poignant short piece in which she old woman with the other loss of

physical signs aside, will anybody recognise the lost portrait of Little Miss?

Miss Hobbie: I never saw such an unbroken body.

Miss Perry: Lovely tag.

Miss Hobbie: You look as though you'd swallowed the world.

Sherman captures the appalling weight of the high point of his production as the maturing Robyn Nevar who has stampeded through two acts like an unconvincing Raging Bull starts upon the case of her baby only least as a vicious vindication of her beginning. As the curtain falls we are left with the curiously legged zone feeling of a vulnerable old woman in red lingerie, trying for time.

The third act is occupied with a recognition of that need for love. The children's season of spring is followed by Miss Docker's confessions of guilty pleasure. Firstly for the bawdy and then for the Rev. Winkelman. His devotion to Miss Winkelman leads to a brief in-hospital about her shortcomings as a preacher and an exposure her. "The truth we know already is always the hardest to tell."

Mr. Winkelman brings his condoleances of mutual regard to his Sunday service. The

message drives Mrs. Docker in action, to make clear the Rev. Walsman with her lightning. She takes on the role of God and pulls her arrow of power around her like a main anchor. But her message is for herself alone. "Oh I could tell, I'll stand tall! All of you! But I have to stand failure if it is worth so much! The only failure is not to move."

There are echoes of Aleg Louie in those words of urgent rage.

I will do such things—

What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be.

The kernel of the cash.

The same ends with the excited old witness, confronted with the body of the dead minister, crying: "My thoughts could light a fire! I could breathe love into the dead—if only they were willing."

The play leaves her on her unconvicted hooks, in the company of jiving children, a refugee and a swami dog who passes on her lot. In her last words she drops dependently upon her last truth. For her there is neither death nor life and only the beginning of humility, her conviction.

That Patsy White should have written *A Cherry Seed* is remarkable enough. That it should have been produced in Australia in 1961 is more remarkable still. Expressive drama may be that some have been living years and lost here or was relatively unknown. Beech was not appreciated in English speaking countries virtually until the likes, and writers like Webbwood can and much less.

Since the likes of Webbwood audiences may now have become much more sophisticated, but they

have become accustomed to a variety of styles in the theatre, no longer surprised, or lost. And that is an advantage. A further advantage lies in a greater willingness to listen to the message of Patrick White's born uses, his evocation of great heart and fervent language. The country has begun to catch up at last in White's generalization and in the theatre he is, more today's playwright that he ever was.

The beauty of Shamus's production and Brett Thomas's design which works so handily with it is that it sides on unfalteringly the problems of interpretation imposed by the mixture of realism and caricature. From the earliest cue on the character played meekly, meekly about the stage, for puppets and Mrs. Docker reacts in one direction, creating a silent screen, from the moment Robyn Nevin disputes about the task in all too visible laughter one knows that she is a prodigious mix of which one may never see again.

The play is a comedy through thick one and Mrs. Docker is a comic character. The Cossacks are happy in their barbaric coming across—the old women in their second childhood like the production never changes, the hard truth Mrs. Docker may be a great figure of her but White gives her up like a fresh wound in an object of pity and warning.

Robyn Nevin's performance as I have seen is extraordinary. The tiny actress, still in her thirties, is transformed into a shadowed full of energy but vulnerable flesh, all too capable of moving the minister's lawn on Thursdays. Pitt Rivers enveloped in carbuncles and drooping lily stockings, the consummate actor that becomes his

thunder. She is formidable and indomitable Miss Nevin goes, her limbs spread as though her body were too big for her, in both carrying his and attacking, displaying at each moment the indescribability of her voice commands. Her shuffling box and ringing arms at the telephone her adored teacher, will remain for me one of the true comic moments in the theatre.

Finally I think Harry Kipnis was right when he called the performance an anticipation rather than a characterization. Miss Nevin is still too young, as actress to bring off the long lucid parts of opera which consummated the last act. In the meantime however, she is at part presented by the cruel succession of John Pescatelli as the Rev. Walsman on whom the teaching of Mrs. Docker's tragic lesson in this poor depends Patsy, unable to cope with paper, replaced sympathy with compassion, the result was disastrous to the final scene.

There were other faults. Uncertainty a tempt to unify the domestic style of the first act with the grandness of the rest diminished the sense of a core now being spun open by its patriotic cushion (the Cossacks really made me want to applaud). Nevertheless Peter Carroll and Pet Bishop under a touching part — Mrs. Docker's useful kindness in maturity. It is a good part — in that second act the blustering figure of Major Kartwright as Mr. Lille is splendid!

A confronting criticism, certainly. It marks a new level in the work of Tim Storrier and Robyn Nevin — and in the contribution of Patrick White in our theatre. Let us hope a well deserved bow by the Sydney Theatre Company.

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Buzo's triumph... Nimrod's failure

MAKASSAR REEF

DARON HILLIER

Makassar Reef by Alan Buzo. Directed by Sydney Buxton. Sydney Repertory Theatre, 14-19 March. Text Review by the Cooper Group. Books Review, Cultural Diary: Paul Smith.

Photo from *Makassar Reef*. Sandra Lee, Austin Dryden, Anna Dwyer and Sean Hayes. Photo: David Morris. Stage Design: James Doherty. Lighting Design: John Giddens. Costumes: Vicki Goss. Set Design: Steve George. Set Dressing: Helen Johnson. Sound: Alan Evans. Stage Manager: Michaela King. Production: Alan Buzo.

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Alan Buzo's *Makassar Reef* is a modern romantic comedy of great relevance and wit, a disarmingly "playful" play with a subtle and titillating subtext. As often happens with Buzo, the danger is that, unless we are aware of the situation, we will take to heart the tenderness and the subtleties for the surface appearance. But then there is something for everybody: comedy, romance, erotic tension, trench conversation; so if you miss the soundtrack there's always the stage.

But in the Nimrod production the hapless players could be forgiven for picking up another plot cue we, the audience, left alone: tenderness and subtlety. This production was not built for a second reading of the text - in case I had been wrong about it - it is a hopelessly clumsy and cynical production of a wise and deeply perceptive play.

Even as he grows older, you fear and loathe at creating human relationships, particularly between men and women. Rhythms and tone pathways have come general become more sure and subtle, and the sense of place and metaphor overcomes dyslexia.

What better location than the sleepy Makassar for those characters to meet, sample, mingle, make out, tell little lies and such? Second best because like all Watermarks they are about as stupid anything bubbly enough to sell it. Yet here too the sex usually one of the hummed-in strong points, doesn't come under the sway of the playwright's whims. So many different scenes are played actually on the wharf that a sense of water gives impetus, water, and the mysterious things that emerge out of it should be omnipresent in the play. Instead we have it given a right that couldn't be more banal. How can we believe in the water, the human, the sexual, the, the island, the beautiful when the characters keep looking for in their backyards, if the set is a cheap and the water just not on?

There is no pattern, no overall meaning in the direction, and the pacing is all wrong, aimless and sometimes tilted too dramatic or histrionic. When speed is needed the pace usually slows, while a pause or digression is unmarked as business and punctuation.

The actors seem left to their own devices, and they each deal with the dilemma as they may, usually employing fire and brimstone in an entrepreneurial spirit. Bill Hunter, that experienced and excellent actor, should be exactly right for Perry, the big Aussie



Sandra Lee, Austin Dryden and Sean Hayes in *Makassar Reef*

salesman, a Flying Dutchman-type with a temper, but he seems to be underplaying an uncharitable attempt to sell. He sits open before others all around him.

Sean Hayes is an arresting performance with just the right balance of nervous sexuality to pull off the central character of Winska Drew. And here the balance is all out of kilter. Austin Dryden looking resentful of a cover-up culture and a wide-brimmed red straw hat can practice his ingrained domestic roughness that should have made Ruth Henley's that "garry little mother" both horrifying and tragic. Instead the Props emanating her words as if she were a refugee from MC DOODS. And who chose these tiny lascars for the strip-off scene under the mosquito net?

The only actor who really comes out of this is George Sutherland as Jan, dry, tropical and, refreshingly grumpy. Drygenes' world playing a loose, the-marrowlessly bony Silver, a man not that and Dutch double dealer. The world of Makassar.

Henry Landesman is lost in a Buzzy-Phi. His surface looks and glances with a kind of my brilliance but this doesn't mean that there are no depths or that he is a light on compassion. Some Sydney critics have been talking about this play as if all it had going for it is a clutch of witty one-liners. What will we have. Australian critics that can distinguish between the play and the production? *Makassar Reef* at the Nimrod is a lot like an afternoon talk episode of *The Australian Story*. The heart-thumping ending of the Winska-Woody affair with its taunting reference: Woody, Do you think being happy is all it's cracked up to be?

Winska: Yes.
And Woody's departing cry "I didn't. I had it!" as

it happens but slipped from his grip since the party into the water before he even had a chance to swim away - is it lost in stage speak.

To this a Alan Buzo writing at his best (looking Australia into the sophisticated travelling world of NOF) the Australian characters, so predictably Australian. Winska Drew irreverently name-calling gun from his Chinese friend, an eccentric with a "Jewell tree" about to take a gobin the World Bank in Washington for a couple of years. Woody: "I've got the experience swimming half of the last place with a sense of space". Both make the same tongue-in-cheek mixture of bitch, mother, seductress and wife. Perry, the naked, achingly who understands, inventiveness, and survival, but not commitment.

There is a kind of empty sadness underneath their words as they hold their conversational duets like marionettes attached strings, teetering on the edge of the treacherous horizon. The parents blare. There is that cold mixture of the comic and the tragicomic that is pure Buzo.

Winska: Does it look at me. Woods. The last time you see me I was happy if you love me you won't look at me. You'll get up and go with her. And you won't look at me.

Both Winska and me. Woods. The last time you see me I was happy if you love me you won't look at me. You'll wait to say goodbye properly. The figure of Winska, the crooked Indonesian immigration officer, sitting patiently on the wharf, waiting for whatever week or month or monstrous person who can decide to cut off three silent waters, is the perfect ending for *Makassar Reef*.

Buzo has a lot to tell Australians about themselves, and I hope those people are out there listening.



Low Budget Marries and Maggs
Drew it in on the University
Last of the Red Hot Lovers

Only a light comedy of situations

LAST OF THE RED HOT LOVERS

KOBRI TADE

Reviewed by *The Last of the Lovers* by Ned Shamus. The Phoenix Theatre, Sydney. 1986. Opened January 1986. Director: Ned Shamus. Design: Stephen Morris. Costume: Sue Rasmussen. Stage Manager: Maggie Bell. Music: Dr. Babs. Lighting: Pauline Rees. Stage Manager: Michael Hartmann. Producer: Michael Hartmann.

In the social comedies of this country adultery and its consequences are treated as a fact, square on. Issues of sexual prowess are mapped, if anything, with the carefree jest. If Ned Shamus plays, and creates other dramas and fiascos, all anything to go by sexual problems are the norm of middle America. A passing comment seems to be a major partane.

With potential givends, bumptious attitudes and, of course, the analyst — the more so when she is played by the Jewish Delphine Achimenes syndrome.

The socially titled *Last of the Red Hot Lovers* fits the unyielding and again Barney Cashman (as Kasparian) has had forty seven years of a pleasant though reasonably hard working existence, an unremarkable life a hero for the left conservative that he believes Life has granted him. Apart from one minor adolescent skirmish there has only been wife Thelma. Now he is attempting to think about death reading the obituaries daily just for the satisfaction of not seeing himself mentioned, and is responding to a pretty two year old largely to shake up the memory of all.

The situation is no more complex than a close proximity of three kinds though Barney never manages "the third" contact. In fact a search for significance is set against a desire solely for physical gratification. The more he wants to do the like Dr Garry Thelma the more the straightforwardly repulsive lady backs off. Finally she leaves — twice.

Eight months later Barney tries again. The pickup is a young actress, but the two bodies are thrown up from her side. She is psychotically preoccupied with a countinous belief in her life as a "thriller" audience concerned with projection, subsuming by big shots in

the entertainment world and, truly, sleeping through nothing else, the closest with her female High school teacher. The whole ridiculous farce goes on as she a cop-out from life's many grisly realities. Barney is left peeling on jet and frustrated again.

Three months later, with him now as ready for the straight physical pleasure as the body of his first encounter, an amputation is made with his wife's prior framing after a distant encounter with her. However all the wants remain hollow as love departs much as liaison is without actually getting down to anything. Her melancholic view of the world is backed by statistics of adultery (17%) and her enjoyment guaranteeing (7%). But all the ramblings over the lack of desire, loving and gentle human beings turn out to be triggered by the discovery of her husband's affair with her best friend.

In the only surprise, of the play, Barney appears finally to snap. He rushes her, flings open the sofa and hurls her outside, in fit of marital dominance. If the world is disrupted, he assumes let us have some decency, desire, love and goodness are the very stumbling blocks that have watched his previous encounters. Of course no traps ensue, it is all charity for female beauties who have with a new vision of how to handle bubble. Barney lies back on the bed... and phones his wife.

The resolution reflects a core搬上舞台 which squares the adultery situation the play throws up, and the audience are left with the inevitable consideration of sexually active themselves as decent, loving and gentle human beings. Such safe viewing of issues allows the play to be viewed only as a light comedy of situations. As such it is a delicate, simple with the possibilities and outcomes coming rapid fire and with subtlety of regular precision.

Ned Shamus' work demands certain fine production for the stage to work and John Dwyer does much ministry to the task of direction. The casting is facilities, the detail meticulous and the casting superb. Len Kerasiotes is the quintessential Barney, playing the role with complete understanding to allow full impact to the final outcome. And the ladies are well determined each fleshing out their cause character. Maggie Deans strikingly elegant as the repulsive lady, Joanne Chaffey as the frumpy teacher and Lynne Collins suitably maniac as the sultry galoot friend.

If Shamus' plays are just light comedies — and Broadway's wild gold too — that visitors quite what the Ensemble (jerkwood) theory is doing presenting them and so many of that. Most audiences be subjected to such false metropolitan American novel writing and because Shamus is capable of presenting entertainment? Williamson, God bless that is much more naive, naive and hence beautiful in his perception, as is characteristic to a man complex. His vision is more interesting and as a comic writer he is almost as funny.

Tactics of evangelism

STATEMENTS

JOHN W. WAGGONER

Statement by Albert Powell, Unpublished Plastic Trotter, The Phoenix Entertainment Centre, Sydney NSW, dated 11 January 1979. Director: Eddie Green. Lighting Designer: John Van Hoesen. Stage Manager: Michael Hartmann. Producer: Michael Hartmann. Stage Manager: Lynne Collins. Director: Michael Hartmann. Stage Manager: Lynne Collins. Stage Manager: Michael Hartmann. Stage Manager: Lynne Collins.

In the wake of the rapturous reception that *Statements* has probably received, I would like to say one thing less than reverent to it. And the response to the production of Powell's seventh live drama play, in the crypt of the Seymour Centre, appears to have been positive nearly one which would befall a religious experience: an emotional commitment to the message with little consideration of the form or approach of its creator. Powell's message is propagandist, but his method is at present one of moral code without explanation or explanation relying on conditioned responses to bring about unquestioning acceptance — the tactics of evangelism.

In *Statements* (Powell's subject is пластиковый sexual apartheid in South Africa). He shows briefly the effect of this law on a white liberal and half-caste school teacher who have become lovers. In the half-light of the bare stage we see them naked, unbuttoning, love-making, kissing, caressing, caressing, then under a flicking switch to the sound of barking dogs, arrested, impeded, panting in fleshiness, and then continue for fun, love and obscenity for her. Between sequences, a policeman, sideways stands dead just his coat upon all their offence.

In South Africa at more than likely that this political statement could have the effect of convincing people with a free ticket of the white quo, even of challenging them to action to end it. Indeed Australia is in danger to the propagandized nature of its audience of evoking a similar response, the self-righteousness of which argues the point of the reaction. But that is not to say that such a political play could not be relevant and interesting to us. Statements holds little in the writing and, in this context, relies almost completely on an assumed response to a known position.

Powell has made the mistake of many propagandized writers, in presenting exclusively his own point of view, which promotes no understanding of the situation or idea of how it came about or even of how it could be bettered. It might have been more powerful had the lawless, characterless, agents of the law been allowed equal revelation of the viewpoint. The play's stance seemed increasingly complaisant as the host of nagging questions remained unanswered, perhaps avoided.

Just as the audience of a church presents a powerful attitude to what occurs within it, so the close proximity of two naked people created an atmosphere of shock and discomfiture in the audience, which was then heightened by the

should expect repetition of stereotypical pasts and self-repeating, repetitively porous, monologues of the simple. Ober Becht and Anthony Wheeler made the most of these effects by portraying the characters with a strong economy, and it is odd to detect that competition to point out that such quidnunc roles readily reduce an amateur gag response test every actor who played them in *Three Hours* in 1972 was nominated for an



Gillian Langford and David M. Matthews on Ergonomics in the Surface Environment

FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY PLAYWRIGHTS

ANSWER

Again from their contribution to the Sydney Theatre Company's Biannual World Season last few years, Ensemble have made a very handsome contribution to Theatre pots with their Festival at Sydney Playwrights' mae at the Stables. Some of the production was necessarily forced but the concept was excellent and the season a great success. The concept, of course, is applied by Ensemble throughout the year, the Stables providing an "alternative theatre" where developing actors, designers, technicians and directors could present their work. For January the Ensemble applied that specifically to five new plays by their local playwrights, each writer occupying one week of a four week régime. It was great to see the Stables with consistently full houses for the first time since the old National days. The choice of material

10

Edward himself has stated in Plays and Players that he would not be a playwright were it not for the South African statement. Statement as a drama he left it unperformed, certainly as style and substance are poor. There is no reason to suspect the writer's motives for writing to make people to the horror of apartheid his subject. The original

report there was something for everyone and
cast, crew and the support of hundreds carried
the festival onward through Saturday. One certainly
hopes that it is a feature of next year's Festival
of Nations. See you in September.

How Sleep the Braves by Philip Mann, opened the first week of the season. It is written in an intriguing manner in which what might have been ordinary events become bizarre, while extraordinary events remain explore a specific situation — the strange disappearance of an Australian chess master during the second world war — and努力 to give greater than that, I suppose, a treatment of good versus hidden evil. The attempt to combine this is not always well but through the well-developed characters Mann is able to keep them conflict. The last act is more loosely written; it has some fine dialogue and well shaped dramatic tension. The second act needs more work. Tom Hulce and Diane Coates introduced some fine action.

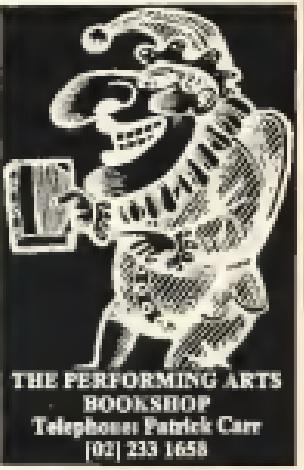
Syndrome, the second wych's offering, was written by Kym Hayles. It deals in an interesting way with an identity crisis between father and son following the fatal cancer of wife and mother. The resolution — one takes over father — is fairly predictable but this the implies no reflected care or the wrong and the play's dramatic tension, are neatly situated around decreasing the gap between these seemingly opposed personalities. All factors crystal clear when set, Bruce Baynes/Hughie, Helen Rooperton's necessary anti-bed with EDD and plenty of sound. Response-time passes nearly forever years ago when the doors exploded in the marred bed. The script has much going for it — wit, witty and had some very perceptive moments. But much of its potential had to be gauged by our due to some pretty wooden acting, some distractored errors and the set. The set was indeed an absolute. It looked touchy Matisse with objects dirt imported from Shaggy World. This is a play where the main character is a Minister in the Premier's Department and characters talk of enormous large financial deals. Really some effort could have been made! Much of the acting was movement, moving the set and working against the emotional line. But the actors were consistently off at ease with developing their characters I can only attribute to the fault of the director.

Sharing Partners and Animal Fugitives & Minerals were two poems by Christine Rossetti. The first draws from the legend like another broken marriage though this one more broken than most. Michael Russ gives much life and

perceived may have an active effect on the spot, as play it in their country is mostly seen as a passive response. Whether the intention, the result could be seen as proliferating or lateral transmission. Though audiences have to decide whether one accepts whether such an emotional appeal can generate the proper institutional concern for the needs which might disappear soon.

profound anxiety to flee the husband's infidelity, alcoholism and profligate family. She keeps a full social programme (still in contact) and disappears rapidly destroying her. (See Nixon's re-investigation article in *Crime in Society* 1980) The point is over-simplistic and while one can appreciate its acceptability, the example of Cleo and Anna the queen (each wife one can only wonder how such a couple managed to produce two children?) The choices though were finely portrayed by Shirley and Matthew Lillard. The second point about Hegemony & Absence was an analysis based on the social mentality of motherhood and television audiences. Its substantive feature was the role model supplied by David Webb and James Cagney. Again from that it was obvious that the audience lived in

Owned by Dick Merker completed the season. I was not able to stay at the final night and was a little surprised at the drop in audience size. I understand that it was the most successful year in terms of box office. This was both audience friendly and a pity. Unsurprisingly because apart from some fine acting (Thomas Corrigan and Gary Daniels) the cast were generally at sea with their and treading. A pity though because the basic idea of silent chapter management is that visual presentation will subdue conflict as would as could be powerfully developed. Despite some imaginative direction by Gary Morris it didn't achieve but it would be interesting to see it worshipped at a later date.





Left to Right: Robert McGuigan (Chairman), Anthony Harcourt (Chairman), Ian Sinclair, Pasquale and Malcolm Keith (Treasurers) and Michaela Threlfall (Company Secretary of *Allegiance Ltd*)

Just so gripping JOURNEY'S END

LAURENTIANA

January 1, 1980, by G. Gould, Mathematics Teacher, Louisville, at Louisville High School. Address: Room 208, Oldham County High School, 1000 Main Street, Oldham, Kentucky 42260. Price, \$1.00. Postage, 10¢. © 1980 by National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Inc., 1906 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 20191. ISSN 0025-5769.

There cannot be many fifty year old plays which still capable of thoroughly propelling audiences of the late twentieth. And when the one in question is set in a chapter in the trenches in France during World War I, and concerns a group of British officers, it is all the more remarkable. But then H. C. Newell's *Adventure* is *Fast a remarkable play.*

Originally tried out at a Sunday night performance at the end of 1923, it was turned down by London theatre management.

more need to could not attract audiences. Due to the efforts of two men — these were George W. Bushing and leading comic James Agate — it eventually was taken up. Although Agate had only seen the second and third acts, he couldnt' stop the play week after week, as the solo sold out virtually as soon as put on — and ran for 554 performances in London and still 11 in New York, three times around. In London it had runs from 1916, 1918 and 1923 at the Strand.

A little later — in April 1950 — Agnes was to write: "I do not believe and never have believed Americans fail to be a tragic work of genius. But at December 1958 I was weary of American films showing how the war continued in some Florida garage. Journeys End something more. It showed us a number of credible people engaged in a credible way in thecredible business of war."

Almost unbreakable, *Anomys*. (I'd never seen one I have never caught up with before, although not so long ago did see the "normal" Mexican Ano High, which seemed to follow the originally closely. Naturally I knew all about the place that many a well known author had not.

In truth no other role of Stanhope or Raleigh, that the stage prior it was a good old man by his compass throughout England, that Oliver had played Stanhope in an original Sunday night production that Coward once played Stanhope to John Mills, Raleigh or Stanhope, that Colin Clive who played the role in the long London stage run went to Hollywood for the film, which was directed by James Whale who had done the same for the play and that both stayed in Hollywood following *Journey's End* with *Fascinating*.

Admiring Tony Tripp's very sensitive acting and naming the lights, in short, I wondered how the play would stand up today. Well, that fact no doubt has a minor influence on what it is. Some of the lines John Blauner at Hasty has could bring laughs if they were well delivered. There is, however, too much explanatory dialogue, telling us the characters and situations, much of which now seems long winded. It is not the fault of the play, today we are given too much to remember and need to everything happening quickly, not to having

Case Study and Examples

With the second and third acts also no longer bothered me. Characters and situations are just so gripping, quite obviously a craftsman at work, clearly matching pathos with comedy. And interestingly for a play of this vintage, the scenario does not appear weak or dated, but natural and authentically dramatic.

As we know Sheriff was writing about people and events he had first hand experience of. The characters are very real and the tales must be heaven-sent joy us most across. Sometimes lives and situations take on the semblance of chapters drawn from films, this one remembers Sheriff created them in the first place on this plan and they have been copied countless times since.

I just about count Mick Roeger as one of the three Australian directors whose work I have admired most; the other two have never worked for the MTC's Imagineers and casting as his previous work has been a few films here although not memorable. Here he has had to do something unusual with the script. But in the end comes a marvellous start: Mick Roeger's effect can bear the weight of that last dreadful family portrait, snarly and raunchy. And then, when it finally erupts, with a giddy laugh. For a few brief moments it is silent daylight outside, and one sees the stag night in all its raucous new light, with all its excesses.

Instead of the actors taking bows, a screen drops down above the stage upon which appear individual photographs of each actor as character; it is most effective.

For me the cast could hardly be belieded, and probably it is easier to single out individual performances. Robert McGeehan who plays Stanhope I knew nothing about except that as Edgar he was the one the only satisfactory performer on the David Williamson version of *King Lear* staged last year by the Alexander Theater Company. Let us hope we shall see more of him at the MTC. Michael Raab, also being outstanding in *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Aeneas*. And Old Lear displays further amazing versatility in the older, wizened and mad Tristes. And the Colonus affectations called Uncle of Anthony Haworth again and again reminds me of one of the sorriest Raymonds in *Mission Blue*.

There is one terribly superb moment in the play just before Octavia and Raleigh leave; on there and the much older Octavia, knowing it would almost certainly distract, is desperately trying to talk about the past in England, and the young Raleigh, super-patient with octogenarian wants only to discuss the red which he can see solely in a phantasm light. Insanely evocative, it is superbly played by Herscovici as Octavia and Ian Richardson as Raleigh. I still long long remember the scene.

Also I shall remember the way Suddhananda managed to convey the extreme worth of Ratiugriva the gaucha master as which he lights and holds a cigarette, and the general status



Jeanette Hagan (Helen), Barbara Chabot (Chabot) and Peter Cullen (Cullen) as the
MTS students Photo David Parfitt

Equus without the horses

BRONZE

Author: James, Lawrence, 1873-1951.
Title: Russell Senate Finance Subcomm. on Proposed J. Harry
McCrory House Water Drainage Study Series.
Series: Public Works House Committee, House Committee
on Irrigation, House Committee on Irrigation
Physical Form: 1 volume
Notes: Includes index.

Plants, especially like poison ivy, have gone out of fashion a little these past 10-12 years. You'd have to say that using all the force of government and agreeing more or less to repeat the search of India to see where it was now at. These days students have become disengaged, given to worshiping not dissident Indian folk (no open-spaced questioning). For substantial portions of the population even St. Augustine is too liberal and logical. With these notes and his unaccountable credences, the Devil of Doubtless is out of the art fash.

"Unhappily given the main subject discussed known that the Greek school is a fragment of the Hellenistic civilization. Even when it was first conceived it has been influenced at and modified by influence of various lands. Scattered and diverse And, worse, the Greek Stoic, who can cover the body by covering the mind, cover the mind by covering the spirit (the best-welling philosopher), the Hellenes, however, to greater measure and the few poor plains formerly ignorant propagandists.

So why exist in the space that sets you to focus in argument between equals, that resists the hierarchical tradition, then comes out on the side of life's complications has to be supported. Indeed that is what the *Haus* has predominantly been about. If there were two words that encompassed the essence of Western theory, they would be "Life's complications". A play that pretends to be the argument we've been waiting for between Falstaff and the Baron

Adams becomes Plaza and Astur, between Schlesinger and Melkman; between Volpert and Lerner, a play that lays these cards on the table would be a masterpiece.

Unfortunately it's not quite like that. The English and middle class and best, around the both a lot like an equation between a rationalized program of some Cartesian Therapy, and a drunken Hesiodic with annotations of poetry and mortality. Separately both of these goals are real and can accomplish all these ends, and both fail together much like the Book of the Therapy. One in conversion, like St Paul, and one in a troubled consciousness and the both.

Here's the situation. McCoy and Anne are separated and with So are David and Helen. Each has had an affair with the other's wife and therefore it is all over now. David and Helen partly because of this infatuation and partly because of the general nature of their lives in America as give them marriage another go. Then they come across The Book which contains The Therapy and are now happy in body and soul. They live more for the present only. They accept the limits of their bodies and minds. They consider that the past is separate from the present and while they can remember it, it has no effect. Thus the prospect of having dinner some years later with their former lovers holds no terrors. They have excuses for privacy always.

For Murray and Anne the contrary applies. The ravaging of their former lives also weakens the prospect of a calling up of the demons of the past. How can they cope? When will they die? For Murray is a shrinking figure, given to Lulu, Long, *Postscript*, The Infinite Mortality and in an Alouette Garryck character who tells us to show what he would love to have experienced. Unfortunately for him his education and social class don't allow it. He is a bookseller, and the classes he has come up to for 10 minutes at the

rather deadly problem of exploring his relationship to his wife and son until and a certain suspense with a mix of constantly questioning students. One of those who ends up being partly and more involved questions. The boy's choices seem to be Poetry or Therapy. His answer is that by taking a major role in a wall, T.E. Lawrence like through the dinner party Merryn awaits the phone call from the hospital saying they've turned off the kid's life support gear. A dramatic flashback to the argument between Like Poetry/Merryn and Therapy/The Word/David.

In the play it is evident when the audience

sympathise for Hera for life and Uncertainty. But we understand he doesn't give the argument any substantial weight. This is interesting. By choosing an unnamed Therapy he has had to be so general that David and Helen do appear lobotomised rather than as humans who have made a bad choice as some people do with Eastern religions, St. Michaelism, or Methadone. And Merryn's anguished sheets of paper of Poetry and Faith at ultimately have an air of despair or perhaps induced by middle class English disillusionment.

However I did agree with him. It is not a pity that both of them were not followed up with

I liked James Corden as Merryn — he gave the role a pensiveness, while lucid performance that was appropriately underscored by a sense of being every now and again Peter Corry too was extremely talented, emotional — albeit controlled and one wished that he understood the woman. But it is most fitting for them. Rhys Ifans has directed the show at a steady pace with a sense of respect for the text that I am sure it altogether deserved. A bit of encouragement breaking out here and there might have livened up proceedings. As it stands, James Biberdy plays a like figure without the focus.

Consummate skill, magical artistry.

FUKUEN PUPPETS

SEIJI KAWABE, K.N.M.

The *Tai Ming* Puppet Theatre is based in Hong Kong, China. It is the first Chinese Puppet Theatre in the world to have its own troupe.

In China the art of puppetry goes back some two thousand years whereas in the West we have only three hundred years of existence, so all apart from Japan the Chinese are the oldest masters in this field. After seeing the Fukuen Puppet Theatre I can only say it shows. In China today there are three schools — puppets or marionettes manipulated by wire in stick and in the hand and the 3rd show theatre are exponents of the "main plot". The puppets have expressive carvings and poses of faces and in the traditional manner in plays they are manipulated almost in embroidered silks and brocades. A puppet can manipulate two characters with one in difference dependency with his or her two hands.

Although the puppets' hand fits directly into the cloth shell like a glove, the techniques according the four branches of war, and stick manipulation as well. The Fukuen Puppet Theatre was established under the patronage of the Communist Party in 1950 and is the living presence of Mao's policies on education as the Chinese Proletariat are Communists and Art of "uniting a hundred flowers blossoms and weeds through the old to join the new strong."

The repertoire for the year consists of five plays, four of which are drawn from the Meng, Tang and Sung dynasties and deal with the traditional themes of virtue and courage triumphing over corruption and evil. The fifth play deals with similar themes in a contemporary setting. But even in the historical plays is the common people virtuous, honourable and贤良 (xián liáng) who respects or serves members of the ruling class.

However it is the consummate skill and seemingly magical artistry that commands our attention and creates the suspension in properly through the art form itself, the puppets themselves words now in their clothes and perform acts of balance and peeling. The six young men and women who manipulate the puppets are related to in the programme as seven a significant dimension which points to



The Fukuen Puppets in the Playhouse.

the high degree of collaboration and the grafting onto each other of a richly detailed and warmly observed presentation.

The precision with which individual characters are rendered was most apparent in three plays which centred on two or three protagonists rather than those that relied on the marital pathology of their households — fight between power struggles seem to be the universal tale quo non. Yet it is the moments of repose that draw us with a character and make them memorable the moments when the monkeys undergo in *The Water Margin*. Eight. The Tiger was outside his premises and serenely rolls the width of his feet in the dimensions of the vast and populous built-in

The Tai Ming Puppets picture himself above his lathe and the deliberately drawn silhouette of Lu Tungping "a man of courage fallen into adverse winds" to set his premises aside. All of that is no lay area, on the resolution of the stories created, but the focus presents come out of an absolute love of representation and art. For instance in *The Tai Ming* Puppets we are treated to the story of a spiritual name crossing lion which is superb enough, but later it is revealed to be more vulgar and underneath are real coy and passing propects — an expert

The Fukuen Puppet Theatre is a finely example of the ability of a traditional art form to survive and transform itself in the light of new times.



Enterprising and mature approach

THE HUMAN VOICE MADAME'S LATE MOTHER

JEREMY RIDELIAN

Directed by John Cullen; music by Stephen Adams; Company: Utopia with Theatre Brokers Ltd. Opened January 19th. Unique River Stage, Gold Coast. Costumes: Theatricals. Madame's Late Mother by Jean Cocteau, music by Stephen Adams. Music: David Chisholm. Director: David Chisholm. Stage Manager: David Chisholm. Stage Crew: Douglas Trotter. Design: Michael Acciari. Set: Michael Acciari. Photo: Kevin Lewis.

An Realistic followed in the traditional post-Irrationalist drama, with the established themes being as if enhanced by the spirit of preceding, as with a bad-tempered Madame who is gradually won over by the Madame Adams Company, only recently formed into a permanent enterprise. Enticing the players and filling the gap. Having convinced themselves to provide a substantial picture of Brokach's theatrical star the B.A.C. obviously intend to show that they mean business their offstage agents well for the forthcoming season.

Despite both our now much preferred allusion and the French connection again, around a distinct alliance. The pervasive interpretation of Cocteau's macabreological maturing comedy makes



Jennifer Flinders as Madame Poiret

Photo: Kevin Lewis

the music of one of Haydn's fine, bittersweet Janus. Considerably Uv Ullman's recent performance also came packaged with a forte, both partners as essential vehicles for versatile acting talents. Nevertheless, I felt that the resilience of the programme proved particularly with the latter piece following the former. One did afterwards that *The Human Voice* had had some of the perch knocked out of it.

Both pieces are of course its very attractions as theatrical contrivance. Cocteau consciously set himself the challenge of writing a play using "four as one man, one character, love and that banal property of mediocre plays, the telephone" and at times the plot is so heavily engrossed as to prevent us with a violent world where people are dominated by events. Here in *Madame's Late Mother* the twist is simple but acute: news comes to the poor bourgeois couple, already fractious. Following Madame's long return from a fancy dress ball hosted at the San Remo hotel Madame's mother has passed away. After much bickering and many confused attempts to get dressed it is revealed that the message has delivered the news to the wrong apartment. No matter in her amiable style the damage has been done: the household gods have been dislocated. Madame's bosom has been invaded by her husband's sustained by the mad and foisted by the meekness and ignorance his generally been shown up for by performance that he is.

It's all gone light-headed madly whilst still played with great panache. Both as actor and director, David Chisholm is a master of comedy with a keen eye for the ridiculous. As the posturing usual fare pushes the stress and jumble around the stage periodically clearing them of laryngitis but reflecting uniformly

portuguese to audience a jagged cutting until the last possible moment is a considerable usage that will bear out for a long time.

Rightly however, and a credit must be given to Jennifer Flinders' rendering of *The Human Voice*. The play is simultaneously amazeballs, as when Cocteau envisaged an entire set of circumstances being behind the unison telephone call, but is a impossible spot less worse for some repudiation to prove the picture together. It seems too easy to put the character down in a cover made calling to her lover throughout her work. Cocteau's homosexuality given rise to a probably healthy attitude to the fluidity of relationships at the hands of a hostile universe.

Jennifer Flinders evades the temptation to stir any harboring social anxiety to the women, she is neither status quo nor resolute or plodding woman. Instead with a fine voice range and a subtle control of inflection she leaves it on a soft sustained note by its own vulnerability and the gift of playing on the vulnerability of others. Sharp, probably for a transvestite star, where perhaps the mystery of the matron has to be grasped, it is a well measured performance, demonstrating that Jennifer Flinders is an actress of intelligence and great resourcefulness. One looks forward to her Lady Macbeth later this year.

Indicative of the amazeballs and mature approach of the B.A.C. is that both plays have been ingeniously translated by the services of David Chisholm, whose linguistic credentials are impressive. It is encouraging to find that translation can be formulated in the way combining translation with a practical awareness of how the words will behave once they go up on the stage.



David Chisholm as Madame's Late Mother
Photo: Kevin Lewis



Raise the flags boys and out with the B.V.D.'s **THE HIGH AND THE MITEY**

BRUCE McLENNAN

The High and the Mitey is a musical not yet written. Bruce McLean's latest book, *Death, Disease, Disaster*, includes Robert Whent and Murray Roskington, two names from Regent's Peter Bronte.

Whether it is a precursor of *AussieBash* or perhaps its antecedent, but audiences seem refreshed and in awe when exposed to a product wholly Australian. Raise the flag boys and out with the B.V.D.'s. *The High and the Mitey* is a musical and gay collage put together by Murray Roskington and Rob Macdon. Macdon was associated from Sandy Roger and Richard Whent while in *AussieBash*. Peter Bronte's Roskington played piano.

The combination of Roskington/Macdon blended, once through their very difference for an evening full of sparkle and dash. From the opening, Whent's "mutter" signs in the final resolution of the knockout ballad "Lieb" written at end of Dorothy Hewett's legal battles, the audience were with both performers, warming to Whent, eager to be amidst a refreshingly engaging atmosphere. The balance between Murray Roskington's realism and Rob Macdon's absurdly moral glee is easy, at times the tempo was intense like when the really excited bailed! Grief in our Town was resolved by Mr. Roskington and in other times you were concerned in laughter as was the audience during Rob Macdon's obsession. Newspaper song. One song to the town where Bob Blotter spent part of his youth was in fact written at 1916 but recovered in her play all 1915, which was something for the drawing of the Australian commitments. This time at the words and that, how many times have I loved that before, is a call that goes. Aussie 1916 with his four letter pin sheet. More from Roskington is a legend, but it is uncharitable in the Mack Laike andapple role she set of today. Whent describes his sense of humour in work on the wall, if we take this to mean a gleefully nostalgic look at people quirks than his humour seems to record a culture not easily absorbed in any other medium. The spoken word, the song, the banter took place precisely in the tradition of Mr. Charles Chaplin and Norman Gunston.

Murray Roskington has been doing the ground for many years now, at one stage she in fact was involved with the then bright

Australian Theatre Company, the connection no doubt for audience with early shows and solid guitar work. Her voice has a maturity which is equally at home singing the Randy Newman song "Short People" or high singing a tough Don't Nobody Bring Me No Bad News. You somehow feel an empathy towards Mr. Blotter, her stories so rough and gaunt, she has a range (English means us) and as a member of the audience commented the singer is being tough but she does radiate a genuine love of what she's doing and puts attitude (rough) a great deal of herself. It is interesting to observe a one time fairly straight talk performer merging with the world of cabaret and comedy. Her choice of material and her vocal delivery from a natural bull to Bob Dylan's style of banter. The comic lines such as "Love at First Sight" and "Dancer with Shaded Boxes" display a satirist not afraid to point feet at oneself. At times she created an atmosphere of mass hell while at other moments you found yourself in a European cabaret, the mood in the sick clubs, the jazz bars and the rock and roll gospel halls.

With so many shows being played for the cabaret/cabaret type setting it is a wonder there is not a regular cabaret coming outside of the theatre world to display such names as Kofi Konsor, Agnes and Steven Collette Melbourne has its "Last Laugh" but also Australia has. In an impression perhaps the closest would be the "Festive Room" whose accent is equally music. Certainly entering the house with an array of tables for four you sensed a certain intimacy for although the production was staged intermittently there was still measure some of that in here's atmosphere. The beginning of Australian flags leads to *The High* and the Mitey a touch of the suburban quality it's a time when we need to be reminded that we do have an identity.

A show well worth seeing for many reasons not least being to witness the further growth of an indigenous style of humour and entertainments.

MERELY PLAYERS

BRUCE McLENNAN

Merely Players is an entertainment about Acting and Theatre. Directed by Michael Wright House. Sunday October 11, 1979 at 1pm. Large hall, 100 seats. Cost by donation. Seats \$10. Refreshments \$1.50. Books \$5.00 and take away \$5.00.

On a fine South Australian Sunday afternoon at the apothecary of Michael Wright House the seats turned the heat to present Adelby Players a reading of a companion about those that read as part of the Adelby Kids Scholarship. Colin George brought together the material to

well as read it along with Daphne Garry, Edwin Hindmarsh, Andrew Louth and Dennis O'Brien. The Adelby Kids Scholarship is designed to subsidise one South Australian over for a term of three years to work with the State Theatre Company. A worthy cause indeed.

The programme consisted of readings from diverse sources ranging from Shakespeare to C.J. Dennis. Much with excellent personal comment with a wide range of extracts, intent and quotation was divided into a sort of drawing room style of meal as a afternoon of romance, mirth and poetic laughter.

One point delighted as Richard Burton's description of Sir Laurence Olivier's performance prior to staging the closing off of his last were moved to the tale of an elderly Australian actor's desperate behaviour on forgetting his lines and applauded the familiar strains of Dostoevski's *The Play Tales* of the theory for the amateur bring a sense of confirmation and reassurance just why they undertake the business of putting on a show.

The actors, or "Devil's Children", as described as one part of the programme reflected a certain intimacy with the material, be way of a listening game you more made aware of the universality of the task. However the days of Oberon being choiced by a captain coming at a Mad Hatter's performance are hopefully no more today displaced people gather in other houses and listen to the voices of creative voices talking fascinating tales.

Playwrighting Competition "Everyman today"

A prize of \$5,000 is being offered to the author of a competition for an "Everyman Today" play.

The human and ecological concerns of the Club of Rome best express the intent for the play.

Closing date for article 21 July, 1979

Further information from Arts Unit Arts Centre P.O. Box 4, Gairdner, A.C.T. 2600



Pervasive geniality

NO W.A.Y.

C. H. WILLIAMS

"... at The Wall Theatre, WA. Opened 11th Feb. Director Diane Cilento. Music & Stage Manager John Morris. Musical Director Ian Linton. Performers: Diane Cilento, Alan Cassell, John Morris, Rosemary Barr. Presented by Perth Western Australian Arts Board."

Being Western Australian in 1979 is no easy thing, the whole state having succumbed to a severe bout of self-congratulatory "celebration" which leaves even fairly intelligent well-meaning citizens feeling wily under the skin. It was a stroke of excellent timing that this new NO W.A.Y. opened 1979 for the Hall in the Wall (not that any night among the many thousands of days of celebration outside was really free). The review was fuelled by mutual pride of our collective self-sufficiency but few of the sketches took us as seriously as us perhaps.

Genial. A sense of geniality pervaded the whole show which was not much diminished by the description of the castlist and on the night I saw it in the moments before the opening number a number containing a clear 'hook' (which one supposed to be water-tight) to the floor causing for the first half some very slippery conditions under foot. As Alan Cassell all bloodied with some sort "No W.A.Y. makes!"

As a uniformly inevitable with series, some sketches were better than others. An hilarious encounter of Australians abroad where a refreshingly broken French and with a marvelously executed series of theatrical parades titled "Play Right" for the highlights of the night's entertainment. A musical couch apparently inspired by the fact that 1979 is International Year of the Child was on the other hand slightly less dexterous than a pair of misplaced consonants during which found Alan Cassell to sing "Nobody". On the whole though

were much better than that and on some of the material (what did writers of these sketches do before they were able to parity interview commercials?) I wonder if sheer quality of performance saved the day. John Morris and John Sydney did most things well, and never in one exception Morris's delivery, as borrowed from Conchita of Cilla Barker's "Left, don't" with razzmatazz and exuberant energy unashamedly to the last was delightful as itself. As, with this, John Sydney's "Fevered PR Lady" sketch was a bit thin on tail but so far as satire goes has very strong performance skills. Alan Cassell showed it with an amateur Odysseus super power and Rosemary Barr completed an accomplished cast and sang excellently.

And there's not much more to be said. A good night out for those not so spontaneously disposed toward our native self-congratulatory orgy that NO W.A.Y. includes even such a mildly tacked down off stage at NO W.A.Y. itself.

Diane Cilento on Tour



Diane Cilento will be touring New Zealand and Australia showing her two films Turning, made in Turkey and The Human Race, made at the first New Age Congress in Florence.

CHRISTCHURCH	— March 2nd at the Ngao Marsh Theatre, 48-7069.
AUCKLAND	— March 6th at the Kenneth Macmillan Theatre, 307899.
NEWCASTLE	— March 9th at the Town Hall, (049) 26-2333.
CANBERRA	— March 13, 14 at the Playhouse, (062) 49-8211.
SYDNEY	— March 27, 28 at the Union Theatre, (02) 660-1355.
ADELAIDE	— To be Advised.

For information contact Sydney 922-4494

PAUL PYTHAGAS AND THE THESPIANS IN CONFLUENT REP'S *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*

Segments remained isolated

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

ROGER PLEASERS

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (Confluence Repertory Theatre, 1995). Director: Sam T. Hsu; Set Design: Sam T. Hsu; Costumes: Sam T. Hsu; Lighting: Paul J. Lewis; Music: Michael L. Sackbury.

Why was there a lack of movement and energy in this production? There seemed to be little revelling and a sparse festive mood.

Director Michael L. Sackbury has given us a rather cerebral production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is essentially an operatic one, with choreographed dances, lovely costumes, quietly blunted sex, and a certain stiffness of presentation. The stiffness was especially apparent in the acting done by the young lovers, the Duke and his lady in fact it was the kind of scene that is all too often abusively amateur Shakespeareana, straight against the sides, the accented unchristianised hand she-eyes that look

not at a partner to an audience but instead into the memory of lines and body gesticulating which communicate little. The loves, Pyramus and Thisbe, for instance were far too genteel holding hands like kids in a square-dance.

They one might say, that this was the intended effect as lighting is the hammer of the action and the instruments of the music. But all is not so underneath the surface of this response of the production.

It was in the presentation of the loves that the play had its most operatic tone. Both Paul Cuccia and Robyn Lippman playing Oberon and Titania are excellent actors. Their voices alone command attention but for duration had Oberon pantomiming from so high and again the festival atmosphere was lost. The soprano needs to evoke some spirituality, or responsiveness. Titania's body movements made all the atmosphere of the stage stilted.

The range of human motion is always the cause thing to carry off in the play. It was the most interesting segment for me, led by Hec McMillan in the Bottom. Yet it did not fit well into the piece.

What I mean to say is that the three segments of the play — the noble loves, the loves and

the action — remained just that isolated segments. The production didn't integrate them well enough so that what was left was a disconcerting array of various images. Some of those images were effective, in the wonderful comic scenes of David Hudson as the blower of the Revels, but they led us no road or plotted entry. The last speech of the Bottomless system Pyramus and Thisbe was performed in adorable Elizabethan manner. But the robes were set off to the other side and barely related to the show. The relevance of this pasty wear to that was largely lost. The relevance should have been enhanced from the production's standpoint if the image of nature had matched the acting style of the loves themselves. The message of the speech itself could not be heard.

A history of amateur theatre is the low ambition behind the stage. Samir Wali's nose was quite good of a bit too heavy on the whole — it should have lightened the stage. The playing of the music, however, was very very fine wrote the downer of Judith Clinger.

All in all, a mild version of the play, as most usually sinking in the bland sense, and as others more intense and rather banality harmonic. Sadly, a job wasn't enough here.

Q & Q Continuation from page 4

To recruit the majority of its dancers from young people trained by the many excellent teachers in the State, who will then complete their advanced training with us on a scholarship basis.

KAIROS AND CHRONOS

DR PHILIP LIEBLICH, La Mama Theatre

"Kairos and Chronos are two Greek words of great antiquity. Each may be literally translated into English as "Time"; however, the literal translation loses the tremendous wealth of distinction that they convey. Made of their understanding of time in its relation to life. What makes man has much great strides in the art of measuring "chronos" in me by the clock and the accurate measurements made easily, almost like we expect and expectated of his friends and understanding in Michaela Tauris' direction "Hedda" and she can tell over the trap of measuring the great processes of life by elapsed seconds."

In the pre-Holocaust Jewish tradition, time was seen as most significant in the context of the moment of critical decision-making, and the taking of action which reflected on the meaning and purpose of life in its community and historical aspects. So "Kairos" is about the relationship between opportunity and destiny and eternity. As far as people today would understand time in the phrase "The time has come" or even "It's too octoch" in Hebrew or Aramaic. Greek culture it would be saying "A significant point of history demands a creature decisive and in acting on that decision the

processes of my being will be enhanced or stalled. Another application would be in the practical arts of horticulture. The "season" of harvest is say December whereas the "time" of harvest demands the seasons of propagation and action — of the appropriate decisions and actions do me follow. The crop will be ruined. If the "time" of harvest is properly observed and acted upon the processes of ploughing, sowing, cultivating, pruning and gathering will profoundly influence the destiny of the community. The "kairos" of harvest becomes."

In Daniel Kahneman's ideology, Kairos and Chronos are found a safety play on these distinctions in the mind of a man who has consciously perceived his "kairos" through the superficial imagination that "Time" is only "chronos". He currently stands above him and all that remains is a sensible related self with no living features, in which "chronos" transversely states that is his ultimate "kairos".

THE CLUB FOR HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE LTD

JOHN MILLION

"I'm very pleased to have here offered the chance to do a David Williamson play isn't really the man who you Australian stage on the stage if not honoured to have been asked to play the part of Jack which has been played in Melbourne by Frank Wilson and in Sydney by Ross Poldrack — so I'm kind of all the work 1973 was (by far) last I stepped off the stage so there has been a break of seven years. Many

approaches and interpretations can solve the problem. Audiences ought to demand that companies have a point of view. This does not mean a production journalist. Audiences too should have a point of view. An open mind is often often demanded to be a stand in neutral.

The theatre should consist of at least one unapologetic response, not locked in but ready to tackle works on their own terms and on those which determine real life when and if the two differ. If such an approach precludes the "true right out all the time" then — should not be allowed by the pleasure seeking spectators again. If no arguments take precedence over "straight" productions of texts, the George says they often do for their pupils they should be quashed. So should those of us who want to see works from overseas when as they might have been overseas. We need to unapologetically engage in the source if we are to make any kind of meaningful or探討的 inquiry.

If the theatre doing away with the disciplines, removed Standard as the starting point for evaluation then so to it. Why should we not begin with the proposition before the production there was an empty space? Now a hundred fold with hyperbole if you will it should? If the answer is yes we can then ask, why?

NEXT ISSUE: THURSDAY

of my intelligence up that along the theatre watch it is necessary, but I don't feel our need as do I like sitting in having a stronger simply an offer comes of a good play then I'll say you.

I think regional theatre is interesting, and I can be instrumental in helping this company succeed. Then I'm very grateful if here had the chance to do so. I've never done any theatre work in Newcastle before though I've been up here for *Hester Rose*, *After* and *The Fourth Wall*. I've never worked with West Mcgregor but I have pretty respect for him as a director.

THREE INDIANAN

"I came to Newcastle because I was offered the part of the coach, which I played in the Melbourne production — it's a short season and fitted in perfectly for me. I like The Club very much as a play. I don't think people realize just how good it is. Though we played in rented houses in Melbourne, the role in Tasmania did your body, because I think people didn't realize what a role. Those whole new thoughts it was a revelation of course."

In my first year in New Zealand and I think regional (here in Australia) to be looked at in a very different way from the English or US model because of the far smaller population. Here there just isn't that many people to cast on and so it depends a lot on where putting on the show. It has to be done with much more imagination at jet people on. And we have been told for so long especially outside the capital cities on a lot of things big Doctor at Large which can lead to very provincial attitudes. We have to keep passing on and educating people if we want to keep them alive."

Continued from page 17

Carell asserts that the role could develop to great proportions with a larger cast. Robyn in addition provides new laughs every night and this is confirmed on opening by the audience the first night and this performance. Ann O'Neil (Mabel) too was robust, after all?

It is clear that Robyn and Ann share a deep respect for each other as well as a shared love for *Private White Vaseline*. Robyn continues to Peter Carell on her approach to rehearsal. She needs to be left alone. She takes an intuitive tool for the character dyslex reading the text. The process allows me an appreciation of her idea of representationality acting.

We talk more generally about theatre. Peter and I discuss Hamlet and small audiences. Robyn discusses Sydney much like my own White plays back to back. She pauses and then caps off the night by saying "what we really need is a critic who likes good plays". And I suspect if that angle set to us at the front of Sydneys drama problems.

Peter, Mabie, at the opening, responds to a theory similar "I don't know really. I'm much too close to it".

Jim is not to be seen. One gets the impression after talking to everyone that there are many Jim Shannons — perhaps that's how a director best exists.

Spotlight

Continued from page 18

John and the film is small enough in focus, or fails to prevent the two to take place without breaking up the company.

It has been a persistent claim put forth since the late 1980s in Australia, that not just chance, but the words of Shakespeare ought to be the building blocks of such enterprises as the STC. Sir Tyrone Guthrie, Heath Bond, John Summers, Robert Lepage, John Bell and Colm George have all put forward the idea in one way or another. Colm George has also articulated the chief alternative problem. Having elected to present Shakespeare "where do you place him?" And he has kept on you persist him? "You can't just pull up Shakespeare and drop him".

Shakespeare has all playrights, needs interpretation. Presenting Shakespeare's work in and for Australia requires alternative reading of a very general kind. "Mixing alongside with Daddo", as Sir Tyrone Guthrie has soon re-called, just won't do. The notion of interpretation of relevance is a crucial one for the Australian theatre at large. If we cannot see an image of ourselves here and now, in the world, through the theatre, then the theatre is washed out once and for all. Selected practitioners and

Focus on

CANADA

Barry O'Connor and John Tasker

Artistic Directors steal the scene in Canada

Barry O'Connor

The 1979 theatre season in Canada was well under way but looking back over the interval the last few months one wonders how it was managed. Certainly, Was the ruling cry of the nation's artistic community, and it takes a lot to get the departed body together. October 24, 1978, was designated National Arts Day, and Canadian performers complained, wondering where savings while provincial and federal money was derived from. The nonstoppage proved the show must go on, however, a challenge to the powers of Ottawa who were not satisfied knowing the actors by then very much could not hide their talents under a principle. The shows have indeed gone on with the national parks playing as the disappointment of the year by publishing lists of the plays that won't be seen because of budgetary pressures. These lists were logical pointing out to the indecisive observer that most theatres had caught the final bug and were planning more productions than they could handle.

In 1979, Stratford had proposed major offerings including no Shakespeares, Michael John Curtis and Peter Morris' *The Winter's Tale* and a "Cala Shakespeare Revue" with the headlined roles for options, Clifton's *Death of Henry VIII*, *Whinging the Devil*, an evening of four Racines in addition to a specially commissioned new Canadian plays. Peter Barry Pindar and Tim Coxon and numbers like *Moscow and Oberon*, "New Tales from the Middle Ages" and the Bernstein/Wilson musical of Voltaire's *Candide*. Stratford, the flagship of Ontario in Canada where the pastimes like it or not was also trying the fortunes of the Canadian Ballet and Opera companies as well. However, even that really enclosed three stage Festival complex couldn't cope. Not through lack of financial resources, nor because of a collapse of some undisclosed part of artistic director Rubin Phillips' account, one show had to be dropped. We lost Beverly Cross's *Macbeth*, A *Pearl of the Orient* and Harry Firestone's *Orion*, but saved, thankfully, two performances of *Private Lives* with Maggie Smith and Brian Bedford as the literary belligerents. It was very much Bedford's season last year and his debut as a director produced a marvellous *Romeo and Juliet*, which had in a

production all the qualities Bedford has as an actor power through command.

Bedford and Smith won't be at Stratford this year, nor was Kevin Phillips to have been there. Last summer Phillips moved to England to take up his sick bed leaving in his wake his company from Stratford. His return will be back in 1979 even though how long a prolific a fellow else. What may happen is that half current Stratford will "world class" players around the principals acting. Is Rodan in the above? It was just a manner that Phillips isn't all in, and that he up to England had been in dialogue Peter Hall from his arrival on the South Bank in *The Rover*. That Phillips will join the divisional of the London Centre in New York in company with Edward Albee and Woody Allen, among others. It is also that Phillips is taking on more and more work next year at Stratford in addition to directing *Any Day* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* admittedly a smallish Roles. Phillips is a conductor in Stratford's replacement, *Seven Summers*. Our Stratford news is as changeable of late as all other like an afternoon's weather. Bill Jon Cuthell comes and does *Richard III* but mostly likely Will Peter Ustinov really be coming to play Lear? Well stay in the picture.



Sandy McRae, replacing the "old" *Hanging in William Sampson* in the new *Sherlock Holmes* drama art *The Incredible Minister of Circumstance*.
Photo: John Mathew

Phillips already wins up a round of 20 baby, and this is perfectly understandable, because so much remains to be done that can only be done in his French National troupe. No next year there's no reason for actors to go and changing place for strings producers. I can't help feeling, however, that 1979 will be a lost year at Stratford and that the war is coded especially when you realize that the 1980 season was announced before the 1979-1981 was to have finished prior of Bedford's triumphal return.

A steady decrease there had a way of gathering, the news during the year you agree John Northcott's *Edgar Allan Poe* at Halifax where he has just opened in *Death*. Peter Cott has gone on to take over in Edmonton. Christopher Neame's *Julius Caesar* in Vancouver before coming to make some much needed hits with the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Local players cannot deserve to Toronto Arts Productions if the St Lawrence Centre seems to fail as uninterestingly with the press and public as Phillips does. Fortunately, Bumper stickers have demanded Major improvements but (not until there taking the blame for shows he does as much as the shows he does) others. He is really a suggestion for Toronto's inability to have time to see a new theatre to advantage. In Quebec the answer seems to have been found surprisingly with the drama of the *Tour du Bois* Major is still with us and as his last season of *Shakespeare's Midsummer*. The *Two Sister Jesters* or *Dead Master Country and Soggy Shows*. It's not without vision and imagination.

Fortunately at this season the St Lawrence has already had two successes. *The Incredible Minister of Circumstance* Tessa's *Stratford* has quite loss *Circus Royal* by Moliere Anton Chekhov and Walter Lessing, and the Miss Hart and George's *Business* (dramatised) *The Men Who Came to Dinner* which Major directed with wit and style. There will also a new version of *The Dreyfus Women*, by Cecile and Gwendoline McDowell which really focused on love and war but was warmly appreciated by most critics.

The *Alibi* *Who Came to Dinner* splendidly reappeared the favour of old ball comedies from the '30s era, and showed, together with the Toronto's production of Julian Fellowes' *Tales in the Dark*, in the high-sophomore style. The Canadians are better at period American than in contemporary American plays, this may seem strange to most Australians who classify Yorks and Canadas in the one bracket while it varies in accents and manners. But when we compare comedy and Canadian productions of Thomas

AKISIN LIKELI DISEAL JHESEN

Focus on Canada

Rita David-Masse and Sam Shepard's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is now playing again, that according to *The Toronto Star*, "is the translation from New York to Toronto. Perhaps it is the softness and tolerance of Toronto's approach to the hard world of New York City."

But what is it a show upon the plays? The *Clock of the Dying* (Sam Shepard's latest) no longer follows on the London Almeida stage, nor in a New Theatre presentation, remasterisation and interpretation a new wheel comes on the hard-edged play's trend towards the more didactic. This is Shepard after the style of Tennessee Williams in the film, as it should be. The same may be said of Thomas Balch's *A Prayer for My Daughter* which reaches out and claws a cold and harsh light on the joys and bonds who are initially as bad as each other. It is our humanity not our sympathy that the playwright is after. Ray Wilson's production of *American Buffalo* by David Mamet recently at the Phoenix, foretells the kind of criticism Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* gave the character which enabled us to see them as characters and as an indication of their society. It's a style that is based on the social realism of the ones these plays are being written at.

Sophie is so hard to define as it is literature in the theatre. Too often it is applied on a play like an early something than a parallel of the play with the audience. In today's style it is an attempt to tell, something that goes down well. This was proved by Graham Vick's production of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* at the Phoenix Theatre. This was a *Requiem* without the traditional camp and cynicism of Restoration productions, "with all a French touch" according Vick. So was it?

has the play been that it will be extended into the next this at the Phoenix, which was to have gone on *The Duchess of Malfi*. Franklin Mintley will be the end of the relationships and characters. But it should I say, especially the big *Love Prodigies* is in Rita David-Masse's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Canadian playwrights and director Robertson Davies once called out the Canadian writers he was speaking at the centre of the early Stratford Festival, to develop their own acting style which Davies hoped would be a "special new lyrical in the wood" I would apply to old Classics productions at the Toronto Opera where new Canadian plays are predominant in the repertory. If there is a truly unique Canadian style it is a play like *Le Tragique* by Louis Riel and Léandre Lapage. The play chronicles a Quebec woman's life and the assimilation of her land and family. Maybe the Québécois thought a French Canadian play should not be given an English review. Jim Casper's superb production of this piece must surely claim its place.

There is much to look forward to in the 1979 season and I hope to start on that in another *Phoenix* Article. Of particular interest will be the National Arts Centre's production of Rita Roncalli's *La Peinture Noire*. How will Canadian actors fare with an Australian play? I hear they're having one in Australia soon for Les Hesling, but it should be an interesting experience at any rate. Vancouver had little success with their *Duchess of Malfi*. The problems weren't just cultural. After all most English language cities have a Double Day but few have a David or Charles.

Canada — A Theatrical Comparison

John Tasker, Australian Theatre Director was invited by the Canadian Government to tour Canada for the month of October last year. He travelled across Canada from Vancouver to Quebec meeting theatre people and exchanging information on the theatre scene in both countries.

Canadians know about as much about Australian drama as we know about Canadian theater which has much. And there's remarkable. Both countries seem to have progressed to a very similar point with little reference to each other. There is the same beginning; isolationism was and more Canadian plays are finding their way to the stage and being produced. There is the movement disease across the country and the corresponding isolation some of the theatre companies feel. Vancouver seems to be away from Ottawa, Newfoundland or the Canada Council in Prince Edward Island. As well the Canadian theatre scene is under the predominance of grants by the Canada Council.

Of course there are great disadvantages. Canada's population is close to 25 million and that population is more evenly spread across the country than the Australian population. At the moment the country is possibly about to be born in two by the separation movement in Quebec and there have always been the two cultures running side by side. Canada suffers an undesirable presence regarding the US across the border. It is easy to gain the impression that the border between the two countries is more a large provincial through which some of the best talent in Canada has to pass. Certainly now in both New York and Los Angeles a large number of western directors and technical personnel in film and television are Canadian. One reason which we in Australia have so consistently exported appears to continue to Canada as a pastime.

I feel that all the performing arts in this country are more vigorous and more healthy than in Canada. The Australian Opera would give more performances in Sydney about than the same total of performances of opera in Canada (all companies included), and the recent showing of Australian films at the Toronto Film Festival was quite literally a bombshell to those involved in film in Canada. Canadian television has quite a bit of locally made drama but again I feel the quality and quantity is greater in Australia.

With such a bright past, it would be impossible to summarize everything I learned in a couple of thousand words. Rather than tackle all



Karen James (Dunlop) and William Wetmore (Bentley) in *American Buffalo* by David Mamet

years of Canadian theatre, I think it better in this article to confine myself to the Canadian playwrights.

An enormous and available degree of help is offered to new and established playwrights throughout Canada. In Vancouver there is an regional organization, The New Play Circle, which starting from scratch in 1966 a few years ago now has a grant of approximately \$300,000. New play scripts are read and from these readings some are chosen to be workshoped and from these workshops a small number are chosen to be put into full scale production. All these services involve professional actors.

A great number of theatres throughout the country offer workshops, play readings and annual writers or residents programmes. Some theatres now have full time dramaturgs whose essential activity is to read new play scripts and new playwrights. Remarkably though are many publishing houses which print Canadian play scripts. Some of them are very small operations but a handful are large publishing concerns.

The Playwrights' Co-operative in Toronto is possibly the largest publisher of new Canadian plays although most runs are small and are passed by Givettier or other bibliobooks in Vancouver past fiction, children's books, poetry as well as drama but they have undertaken some of the largest number of amateur playwrights in Canada.

I rarely discuss, well for the playwright the most difficult given and also the ability to make his plays accessible in stage form. I suspect however that the situation was somewhat similar to that in Australia at the present time where new playwrights who established themselves in the early 70's have more chance of having their plays performed than newcomers.

Bernard Slade the author of *Some Beer Here* and a new play *Tragedy* playing on Broadway, is possibly the wealthiest playwright ever in come out of Canada. He has toured recently in Edmonton having originally left Canada in the early 60's when he said "The people in charge do not care what you put on as long as attendance was good. The drama was mainly run by non-Canadians who did not take my work in my Canadian way seriously. I had to get out as quick as writing." Things have not changed basically for the playwright up here. Slade observed on his return visit "Canadian plays are going down like flies in late summer, with little respect to their audience, because they can only afford a little advertising. If I had submitted Some Beer Here to a Canadian Regional Theatre the play would still be sitting in somebody's drawer."

I believe that Bernard Slade is being unduly pessimistic and negative about the situation. Certainly no Canadian playwright resident in Canada can earn the money he can commands.

Certainly he is correct that most Canadian plays seem to be performed in theatres which can profitably turn them from being profitable. A large number of professional companies throughout

Canada seem to play in houses ranging between 150-200 but few Australian Canadian plays find an audience outside. Most of the larger companies are repeating one or two State Repertory Companies, make only token gestures to Canadian plays and often these are only to be seen in the small auditoriums connected to these regional companies, a situation not unknown in Australia.

So despite my comparatively lengthy visit to Canada of over thirty days which took me to seven major cities, there were few Canadian plays to be seen. Some companies had yet to begin their season and others had not scheduled a Canadian play at the time I was there. From around twenty four visits to the theatre I would have seen no Canadian works all of which were amateur but were very by Canadian playwrights I wanted to see in performances.

To give you some idea of the variety of Canadian playwriting let me list a few of them:

Michel Tremblay at 36 is the most important playwright in Quebec where he is regarded by some as a cultural hero. To date he has written six plays nearly all of them translated into English. His plays have been performed across Canada and the US and one *Le Roi Soleil* was performed in Paris, France. Tremblay's impact is partly due to his compassionate characterization and partly because he introduced jargon to the stage. French is the rural and street language of Quebec and Tremblay's use of this language was intended to mean the rejection of French cultural dominance of literature and drama. Tremblay has had 11 plays sold I would say in the theatre. I went to political theatre but I know political theatre is still as I write below.

David Foenkinos has just aged 10 and in my knowledge has written only long plays of which *Le Déshabilleur* is the most important. Set in the shopping centre of a bourgeois town, *Le Déshabilleur* gets drunk and decides to go to work. Books by Givettier has developed his dialogue as "rough mystery précis" and Gobet and Miall has written. Foenkinos books are like in a fast-paced film of lightning快 and intense lights against the dark against the light.

While these two playwrights contrast well with each other their other playwrights simply demonstrate the breadth of which makes the Canadian playwrights a non-typical.

George T. Walker Jr has written over many plays, a number of them set far from Canada and far from society. Stephen Sondheim amongst his characters *Carrie*, *Sister Act*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Aspects while Howard Da Silva* is set on the porch of a decaying colonial house in the state of Massachusetts. The characters are all Nazi doctors but inexplicably assist a prison move into a Royal Canadian Mounted Police press and a Chilean-chavista Russian act out real and imagined roles in the chase of the commanding judge gradually reveals them. One of Walker's earliest shows certainly in both these plays is the psychology of time as it affects

the kernels and leaves of a dying culture.

Also he received from my colleague from in from Alan Alda. Less than 20 lbs was lost in the Kharkov Soviet of Authors parents. He has been in Canada since the late 60's and has written a number of plays. A man for his most of his life he describes his plays as "short or long features". His intention is to continue to explore *Lucky Strike* which had the working title of *Kostroma at the Alhambra*. Imagine a 10 Grade movie about a man who has got on the train in Africa as well imagine every role of every vice has been played into this film. Actions are repeated - what conversation does it is sustainable to his humanity. One of Givettier's will and the more work performed with this second coming to an increasingly load. Givettier never says I do not think that we will be seeing this play, or any of Alda's until he can be persuaded to give us Australia to stage one of his works. Each Strike was two years in preparation.

Lastly amongst those Canadian playwrights we should see in Australia a George Bays short play *The Story of Shaka* written in 1963 - a management in time in the Pacific revolution in Canada as *Requiem Of The Stevenson's Death* in Australia. After deal with a native Indian girl who leaves the reservation for the city where she dies owing to a pregnant victim of what makes violence and her personalisation towards, naive people. *The Story of Shaka* had a major influence in awakening consciousness of the native problem both for whites and the native people themselves. It has a number of plays to his credit.

What seems especially popular in Canada certainly in comparison with Australia are documentary style plays created by a Company.

These were in the last century made popular by Toronto's Theatre Free Monthly. A play which has been well received in a number of centres in Canada is *The Farm Show*. The Peace Monitors Company spent a summer at a farming region near Clinton Ontario collecting material for the play which as the role requires performing people and their lives.

Alberta's Native Network has been extremely active in this field. And Harvard Stage Library is an examination of the economic boom in the oil with The Roads of Alberta had a successful season in New York. Two Miles Off another of their works shows the decline of the traditional ranch economy.

Peter Wheat won the poly out of these collective plays that I saw. It was having a box office success at the Canadian Theatre in Montreal. Peter Wheat talk of the early on this and the formation of What Co operates by the former to oppose brokers who had power rich playing the wheat market. Peter Wheat was a genius writing in the theatre. Well played by a small group of actors in fact the original actors who had conceived the show a year ago, a solid story in short scenes with songs dancing and even a remarkable piece of juggling. The most an demonstration I have ever seen of stock market

opinions.

Before I left Currency Press asked me to check on play publishing in Canada. Already, Currency has an agreement with New Zealand where Currency is represented in New Zealand and has the New Zealand plays in Australia. Currency were considering a similar reciprocal arrangement with a Canadian publisher. I don't think we can for me to make any announcements about that at this stage. It is in progress and it is possible that Currency play rights will be made available throughout North America and Australia will be able to read the likes of some of the fine plays coming out of Canada - and hopefully not most of them produced.

Whenever I went to Canada, I broached with various English critics and playwrights the idea that there should be an exchange scheme between Australia and Canada. The basis of my suggestion was that should English companies want to include a particular Australian play in their season, the playwright and an Australian director could be made available to them and of course the same would operate in Australia with a Canadian director and playwright coming over to an Australian theatre. This idea was enthusiastically received without hesitation by all in Canada as well as by those Australian directors I have been able to speak to at the theatre here. I was back in Sydney. It is not a scheme which I can see becoming operational immediately. A number of funds in Australia will have to be secured and through the Canada Council and Canadian External Affairs applied the idea we will have to be sure that funds will also be available in Canada. It will take time but it certainly is a more economical way of exchanging our theatre heritage than involving large companies backwards and forwards across the Pacific.

In the next few years I am sure we will see an increased exchange between Canada and Australia. I am only one of several Australians who have recently been over there. John Reinholdt, Leonard Radis, were also in Canada in 1978 and the year before. John Curran of the Australian Council visited that country. Several copies of *Theatre Australia* which I had with me were definitely dog-eared by the end of my visit. They had passed through so many hands eager to have knowledge of what's happening in Australia. In fact Australian plays are already beginning to generate interest. The *Shattered* of Stephen Jenkins was performed by the Vancouver Playhouse towards the end of 1978. John Ross's *The Peculiar World* is due for a production by the National Art Centre. Canada's national folk company in Ottawa is the first out of 1979.



LETTERS

Continued from page 8

Dear Sir,

In the *Theatre Australia* review of The Stage Company's production of *Pink Boys* (Wednesday during the Adelphi Festival) you said you allowed very little time to cover your entire work of a "unusually produced".

The Stage Company is a fully professional alternative theatre based at Adelphi and is recognized as such throughout Australian theatre. Our performers are all members of Equity.

We have been faced in many quarters for our continual fight to survive in the difficult area of alternative theatre. Please do not make the battle harder by allowing *Theatre Australia* review to suggest that we are less than professional in either our philosophy, our practice or our writing.

Mr. McLevythe, the critic concerned, without seeking to suggest one less than professional in either their philosophy or practice that he knowledge no one in the Stage Company is in fact receiving any salary for productions up to this time.

Yours sincerely
Gordon Polson
Prog Secretary
The Stage Company
Adelaide

Dear Sir

May I make it clear that Mr. L.L. Davies' reference to an attack upon a handicapped child in his letter published in this February issue has no connection with my work that published by my company including the plays *The Two Hosts*, *Very Old Mr. Chip*, *Postures* by Dorothy Howett.

Yours,
Philip Parsons
Chairman
Currency Press

Dear Sirs

As a professional journalist I disclaim myself from the last two paragraphs of a report in your column "Quotations and Queries" (January, 1979) headed "Queensland Quirks".

Although the paragraphs appear with my report under my name, I did not write them and have no knowledge thereof.

I therefore accept no responsibility for the validity and accuracy of these last two paragraphs.

I do not have my reporting on research and selected and unselected quotations as I did the book an amateur and dilettante practice.

Perhaps the editors of this publication should recreate the column "Magazines and Queries" to match the dubious nature of its content.

Yours truly
Geoff Spencer
Newmarket, Qld

To apologize to Geoff Spencer for the unfortunate error of printing his article without distinguishing it from the editorial comment which followed.

Dear Sir

I have read with interest Alison Maclean's letter disagreeing with some details of my account of the events associated with Sydney New Theatre's 22nd July 1978 performance in the Savoy Theatre of the anti-Nazi play, *Tid the Dry F'd Dec*.

Not having been present myself, I cannot vouch for the exact nature of the police participation in the incident. The main source for my October and November 1978 account were documents from the New Theatre itself written three years ago and based on my original account. As is well known, there are often several versions of officially claimed events, especially after the passage of some years. I welcome Alison Maclean's efforts and thank her for providing another view.

Yet another was the *Workers Weekly* report that at the end of November 1978 the audience was told that the presentation was being constantly interrupted by the police instead the stage and the question was put "Should we continue and face the consequences?" whereupon the answer was given as shown of "Yes, carry on!" Jerome Kerr who was in the audience says today that he definitely remembers seeing police on the stage but does not recall the nature of their "presence".

Only a wide sample of all the reminiscences would help to resolve the actual facts. If it had been running a longer, full week with more time to open it could have brought more powerful counter-movements, with people involved in the arts and other events mentioned in my articles.

However, in the Savoy case the essence of the matter is that under pressure from the Nazi German council of the day the H.S.W. Attorney General gave New Theatre only three hours notice that the performance must not take place and warned of the severe penalties. Altona Maclean's interesting story about her mother replacing a nervous actress at the last minute is not only further testimony of the tense atmosphere in the theatre as predicted by the box and the position of the police, but also serves to emphasize the courage of the white company whose members were taking possession in their stand against political censorship and their defense of an anti-Nazi play.

Yours sincerely
Mona Brand
Perth Point



International Year
of the Child 1979

Children's Theatre: A series to mark The International Year of the Child

CHRIS WESTWOOD started the Youth and Education Programme at the Adelaide Festival Centre five years ago, and in that time has been involved in the creation of *Come Out* Festival, the Youth Section of the Adelaide Festival of Arts, the establishment of the Education Department owned Theatre 62, Dollar Theatre Schemes, the alternative to Football Series and the Australia Council/Schools Commission Study of the Arts in Education. She is also deeply involved with Feminist theatre in Adelaide.

Women, Theatre & Education

Despite the historical example of anti-feminist children's theatre in Australia, the general impression people have is that it is "stodgy", "ugly", "too earnest", "unadventurous", "politically unsound", "didactic", "low status", "healthily sentimental".

I believe there are explicable social and historical reasons for this, and that because of the kind of social changes which have occurred over the past forty years, we can expect to see a considerable metamorphosis in the near future.

A more characteristic of children's theatre - notable for its absence or "other" status - is the domination by women and children. This is not only an Australian feature but obvious in other countries. The clustering of women, children and education in the one field has produced the kind of work which elides the requires alone. A brief look back溯 might explain to a certain extent, why children's theatre has developed in the way it has, and therefore where it might go in the future.

Political social and economic changes in the nature of production - advanced by the onset of the Industrial Revolution and more or less crystallised by the end of the 19th Century - led to the creation of a new social category "youth". The introduction of mass education established by the first compulsory and secular Education Act of the 1870's and the abolition of child labour by the 1900's in most western countries consequent upon these changes meant amongst other things that:

- children and familial or organisational education were increasingly bound together in place, time and expense
- middle-class women were freed to work outside the home
- money was made available for the moral, social and aesthetic welfare of children
- men moved right away from the domestic sphere, including child-rearing, leaving it almost entirely to women
- scientific research began to examine human development, with "child psychology" becoming a recognised discipline by 1920

As a result of these changes, some middle class women were able to move from the traditional domestic sphere into the (paid) world

of work. Nevertheless, they moved into areas which were congruent with their so-called natural role of nurturing, caring, making and easy. Many moved into teaching, because they themselves had a reasonably upbringing for the task. The association of women's domestic function has had profound effects which are being felt now and are particularly obvious in children's theatre. For as long as women were, and even were, working in a traditional yet public option such as education welfare and health, that sphere would be determined by a female approach.

It is not so much a matter of a particular gender dominating a particular field but rather how that gender can, or cannot. For when women moved into paid education and the arts they carried on their traditional roles as guardians and transmitters of moral and cultural values. This role requires and promotes a certain entitlement and passivity not found in the male dominated adult art world, as Jeffry West convincingly argued. As Elizabeth Jayne points out, "the self conscious assumption of a role makes it a conservative force, but as long as it contains very royal values it will also be a shaping force". An unbroken children's theatre which will give this view of the world, using it as they use all other media under the children's eye for the teaching of moral and social values. Why, written as a general rule should it take the roles of, of course, dependent upon the social and economic structures of

adult society. Patricia Speck gives a fine summary of the attitudes of 19th Century educated women towards the problems and horizons of their sex, which in turn, determined their creative imagination (and it is easy to trace these characteristics in recent children's theatre pieces). Speck says, that such women "perceive some of the injustice of women's position as inevitable, voluntarily relinquish that claim to a life of independence... the demands of society beyond law and the needs of other people... they demonstrate that living is a sacrifice more demanding than self control... Unleaving as her vocation, she translates isolation into social opportunity, transcending indignation at her lot". Women who are taught to believe in the primacy of finding and their dependency on men teach that to children and traditionally any form of individuality (such as children's theatre) becomes a good ruse. Having big hopes and ambitions for woman-leads by a rule which is assumed to be "typically female" - propriety, obedience, domestic, cleanliness, physical, and often moral purity. Men generally ignore that role so women for several reason, -- the chief of which is that women are supposed to be better caretakers for children, are supposed to know better what children want, need or like, because of their close observation and long association with them. This is not a determining factor of male creativity, which draws inspiration from the world around (the social world and not exclusively from the domestic sphere). Children's theatre has some of the same traits and is a character, if divergent, to some that of writers for adults, most women have written at least one children's book, most have never done so.

Saying it used women's role which is essentially passive, and saying that children are equally powerful, explains in part why few men find children's theatre an attractive field of work. If the creators, producers and producers of drama for young people are predominantly female, then it is no wonder that the men in whom they work is occupied the same status that they are, particularly when that low status is coupled with the low status of children's theatre also again that lack of earning



Come Out '79 Adelaide Festival Lecture
Amphitheatre
Photo: Australian Newspapers Ltd

Children's Theatre

power. After all, it is by money that our society measures power. Men, particularly, do not willingly look to areas that are possibly unmasculine. They are really frightened (and maybe that is later, too). Complicating the whole thing, and related to traditional women's role, is the fact that many women for so long have been denied the training and experience in "adult" theatre that they have had, particularly in key areas such as directing and designing. Is it any wonder then that people describe women-dominated children's theatre as "feminist" rather than "theatrical"?

Among them, that women as creators of art, the children are more likely to work in "education", is it important to look at the confluence of education and young people's performing arts. It would seem that "education" has compounded some of the characteristics, perceptions and moral tone brought to children's theatre but added a new dimension to that of blindness. Education is perceived by its practitioners as much of a tool of social control as witness have been seen. Stories, playslets, dramatisations and eventually full scale productions for or to children, have normally been seen as part of children's "education" — either formal or informal, and stories, playslets, dramatisations often made to outside the school have had a didactic, moral or incorporated in them. Increasingly education has become the prime aim for the development of young people's arts.¹ The ramifications of that are significant, particularly if one examines the considerations in educational change and change in children's theatre. For example, on the one hand, if there begin the progression in education (particularly those educated in the last 20 years) from the theatre world who have drawn attention to sexism, racism and classism in cultural products for young people. On the other hand, the necessity of the economically powerless children's theatre to attract education funds to keep themselves alive has had some disastrous effects. The "progressive" educators in the arts for very young have led to the creation of "youth drama" and "drama in education". Through originally born in Britain by dispossessed theatre people in Australia TIE work is clearly the property of education as much as education is TIE's market. The dramatic factor of the designation of TIE work could be put down to a possible rage at the ponderousness of modern theatre practitioners and the notion such practitioners constitute. However, it can be argued that the wholesale ditching of tales, fables and some classics means the wholesale casting of imagery and symbolism — that mythological element that makes art "art". If one refuses to put writing into a children's play — and I think we should — because writing may reinforce a children's myth that women are an ultimate symbol and, thereby what our system requires? Then the current moral bankruptcy trend of early children's theatre has been superseded by equally moral dislocations in TIE and youth

theatre, but with a view children and two dimensions. So now an audience becomes a respectable profession for men and through it an open forum for children there is great difficulty in striking free from old traditions.

The other side — the need to attract education's money — has also caused some dodging in children's theatre. If one is forced to integrate with education (unquestionably one may also have to abandon or make one acceptable some good ideas or approaches, in the arts). Certainly, children's theatre is not helping with the ideas and symbols and terminology that good adults² theatre has. There is also a tendency for those working in the arts or education departments payoffs to be like many teachers, security conscious, wary of experimenting theoretically, and not inclined to move from project to project, or from company to company unless artists generally have to do it free and which is rare, keep them busy. Teachers generally also suffer from a conservative and static, stereotypical background inherent in Australian education, and a non-specific and unadaptable theatre training. This is not teachers fault any more than it is women's fault that they are conditioned as they are.

The language used to get over hands on education's money further angers, all the problems. If women have been trained to argue constantly, and are asked to justify a case for funding children's arts, they will argue constantly — traditionally seen as "woman's way". This, coupled with the pseudo-academic jargon of education, can only make its educational, nurturing, pulling, city-upsells to the better nature of those in power (and who more or less automatically dismiss the protest and the argument with all the adjectives listed at the beginning of this article).



Community Arts
Photo David Bannards

So where's the great hope for the future? The seeds are in several things. Firstly, the changing role of women might mean all kinds of influences in adult practice slowly die away, writers and performers trained in both theatre and education, they will take their established place in the social world as more right in the domestic one. Old myths will die out in consequence, but new symbols and images arriving, some of the old functions of religion, the unchallengeable in the availability of displaying, as Piers Mattison puts it, "the shared predominantly culture specific and shared semantic systems which unify the members of a cultural area to understand each other". The "progressive" influence might sharpen people's consciousness of the unreliability of some aspects of bourgeois culture which can only lead to an increasingly positive approach to art as a way of experiencing and appreciating the world. It takes specific encouragement from perhaps Australia's greatest youth director, Helen Bikales, when he talks of the need for a process which aims to "reimagine the material of experience", with an awareness of the politics of culture. Or from the new children's literature, where people like Tom Uugstad, William Major, Alan Gurnett are producing significant work. Thus in the cause of the problems of children's theatre the hope for the future can be perceived.

NOTES

- 1 These descriptions were gathered in a random sampling of people who work in various jobs, including theatre.
- 2 The international children's theatre association, ASBITE, is dominated by women, as is the American Children's Theatre Association. In no other organisation history lesson script (perhaps one on nursing) would there be such an oligopoly of women as appears in *Peter McDonald's History of Children's Theatre in The US*. Furthermore, I believe this is because English speaking countries had the vanguard of capitalism.
- 3 *Postscript* (London: Picador, Tom Durius, Avon and Hall) published between 1971-1981, is a great deal of work in which child development is presented as a topsy turvy phase of human survival focusing the basis of modern child psychology.
- 4 Jameson, Elizabeth Anne: *Feminist Myths* (Peter Lang, 1983)
- 5 Speck, Patricia: *The Feminist Imagination* (Doubleday, 1973)
- 6 Children's theatre unlike Broadway was not affected by the Depression — but in fact thrived in the US. This study proves the resilience of women and children from poverty economic movements.
- 7 The recent Australian Council/Schools Commission Study of Education In The Arts is a manifestation of the now highly formulated links between children's arts and education.
- 8 *Maryella, Feminist Mythology* (Prentice, 1972)

Not dancing but moving

Dance Umbrella's and Dance Friends can often be very unpredictable regimens, but an audience especially. One can keep on going to them and being continually disappointed by the legions of half talents and raw talents that insist on parading their wares and then, very occasionally, one can discover something that is fresh, alive and original, something that makes all the disappointment worthwhile.

Ballet '78 last year and the Dance Umbrella at the Bronte Centre that followed it were almost devoid of originality, style or real choreographic invention.

However the Dance Walk presented at the Sydney Town Hall as part of the Festival of Sydney was such an eye-opener that personally I think, serious consideration should be given to including such companies or groups as the One Earth Dance Company, the Dance Exchange and the Contemporary Dance Theatre (above) Queensland in the next Ballet Festival so as not only to cover a wider spectrum of dance and entice a more or less captive audience into the discount prices of the art form, but to open some new blood into the venture as a whole.

State and National companies of Ballets Australia, by then very similar, and no be really careful about who they put on at those pantomimes but these smaller groups have lost in love or disapproval and can therefore put to their accompanying advice.

Each of these groups have a definite character, each, however, domesticates their structure, reflects the personalities of their directors and prime movers.

Tai Kai Chan, on director of the One Earth Dance Company is a mix of both the drama and the dance. Dance has always been theatre of course, but for him and his company the dance research is subordinate to the drama. His story and the drama Per Russell Dances and Marion Hassell, director and core members of the Dance Exchange, the emphasis is uncompromisingly on the structure, form and architecture of dance in itself and its relation.

These two groups are poles apart and so the Dance Walk, at least, used to the two most extreme forms of choreographical thinking. In other categories, including the Melbourne State Dance Theatre and the Dance Umbrella took their stand within those parameters accordingly.

Chen's more fascinating and expressive work to date is as far as I am concerned in *Familie Porree*. In more ways than one it is similar to John Hopkins' famous TV series *Waiting for a Stranger*. As the work progresses, one gradually sees and sees the predominance and the tangible signs of recognisance that of the daughter, the



Doris Laine, Lyn Hock and Jane Goldsmith in the Contemporary Dance Theatre's *Father and Father*.

father and finally the mother. *Familie Porree* could be said to be an encapsulation of the glorification of a stagnant family adjusting to the different social needs of a new people. It could also be a disconcerting look at the same. Few themes of age yield sharper, less of communication and the systematic breaking of a marriage or the gradual and painful process of maturation.

There is an "clawing" in *Familie Porree* it is all gesture, no gesture pared down to the essentials as in Kubota in *Perse*, pared down so that you are caught up in a single movement of an arm, the spatial deployment of bodies and the different qualities of a walk or look.

There are small things that make you like a human being. The repeated way in which the mother regulates the daughter when she tries to interrupt the breaking of a cake instance, the way the mother allows her husband his maximum body stops, his effort of simulating the failure the always ends so sooner than when he tries to make it up to her; or how he is allowed to go into

a room collapsed in the floor, ignored by everyone and all the girls.

There is some vigorous movement for the young boys and the daughters and a lovely close that presumably leads to the marriage where gradually the father falls out of the movement and the girl is left alone to be comforted by her mother with her teeth through all of herself.

It's a quietly disarming piece of work but a reticence in the usual meaning, not merely for the economy and force of an language and construction but for the gripping physicality it gets from its performers.

There were other works on the programme that had their dancers crowding the space around them but which added up to very little, whereas *Familie Porree* with its carefully considered and calculated uses of movement for ourselves there is shown a keen analytical intelligence at work, an intelligence that knows what not to do as well as what to employ.

The rest of the pieces at the One Earth's

Dance

performance were not as gripping or as harrowing as *Family Pictures* and *Out There*. No day would seem to be less strenuous even for the different emotional states and choreographic languages of the other works served here and evenly "received".

7 Women using traditional Chinese music and a couple of female chanted in what looked like books with puppets just left apart after an interesting beginning and disappeared into what looked like a noisy dance of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Khmer Rouge Deposited and Burying, an overall influence set seriously on top of a very run of the mill concept of anything舞.

Christine Keeler gave us that battle of bees again to yet another piece of Michael Curtis music. Giselle had a lot of promise but it just exhausted itself in its own length and by too many last and peacey shoves into it, unprepared for and uninterested, just to put the thing out. In the end it just seemed to forget what it was it was trying to say.

The Melbourne State Dance Theatre, directed by Alan Barker and musically supported by the Fiddlers' Union, showed a good deal of enterprise in its repertoire, presenting a fascinating collection of early works by Barker (two Astor and Graeme Murphy among others).

In Barker's works, despite the long spell about them given by the choreographer before their performance, never once does appearance tryed song for its. His example had us two protagonists walking and running their way through some basic classical ballet formations and then showed us the floor-ruler grouping role of "modern dance" so favored of John Balcar who over upon a time created a ballet called *Afro-dile*.

Graeme Murphy's early piece *Tableaux* was interesting in that it showed the early thumbprints of his style without the luxuriant and affective, that sometimes obscures his work these days. It had all the folding, undulating and odd configurations that tea leaves seem to have and vegetables love but rarely in a way apparently that Murphy seemed trapped by a habit of finding some form past for their own sake, probably symptomatic of a choreographer trying his hand at anything and discriminating for himself just what can be done. Be that as it may, *Tableaux* is an easier more lucid and manipulative than necessary.

The other work presented by the Melbourne State Dance Theatre was Don Aslett's *Between the Stars*. This is yet another one I should say could forty over the ideas and concepts of today unchallenging. Level Seven. It is stuffed full of ideas about personal makeup and the role place, significance and meaning of the individual within that society. All of which is to say that such questions are not rare for theoretical analysis they are but I think that dance as a medium can be very penetrating or cogent in dealing with such questions.

For all its pretensions *Between the Stars* fails one clutch of ideas: movement with people

down on all fours to simulate Earth Men these go three up against a total quartet (including the general force) with a measure of love and caring that looks terribly old fashioned despite its inventiveness and a great deal of art at the end with the Individual left alone. For all the intention of the choreography (and it is quite remarkable) it is all put at the service of a bland, simple minded and superficial theme so that the stated effect comes close to nothing at all.

Something very like could be said about nearly all the works presented by the ad hoc Sydney based dance group known as *Body Blows*.

There was something called *Vegetable* created by one Zebbie Zucco that even a morally defensive child of that could find derive and a momentarily mysterious piece of "stage theory" called *Savage Summer* based on Tennessee Williams. *Savagely Last Summer* and choreographed by Cecily Chisholm.

Now, given the fact that even solid performances of the play have seldom made any sense of it to present the play in terms of dance is a total non starter. The play is for all intents and purposes about varying states of mind, almost impossible to translate into dance terms unless one is an Ashton or Robbins. But to go even further and try some Martha Graham type grandiloquence on the work surrounding it with sets, costumes, mood music and suspended places leads to me personally closer to a mutual death with Wolf. Savage Summer died very early on in the piece, it can be taken almost as a rule in dance that the more grand the staging the more sense of the music and the more obscure the presentation the less interesting or interesting will be the choreography as well. There was just not much in it of an uncoordinated and too much of a "Yah" than thought about. And I have said before if just alone I work on such a packet of *Tableau* as a rule modern just because you *feel* it there has to be some concern over the music as a whole and the final product. There was very little thought in *Savage Summer* and it emerged a cargo cult accordingly.

One work by Greg Barker that came near to saving their reputation was *Promises* by Norman Mailer and set to the first part of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Despite some fairly old mannerisms in constructing the work (several cuts and characterally) it was also refreshing in that it showed that the file doesn't necessarily need huge masses of stretching dances to make it work. In Mail's version it was merely a lone chess game between two women. Each edged, calculate, and movements. *Promises* was danced with constant association and uptake (except by Belinda Mitchell and Sandra Crittall). It was gradually unengaged by *Star Candy's* speech making some of course but then nearly all versions of the bodies always barefoot.

However, there was the highlight in the session apart from the Dance Company and Dance Exchange, none of which was used and that was the appearance of the Contemporary Dance Theatre from Queensland. Peter Lavin's solitory male in the company and something of a guiding light assures the role of Russell Dennis (who sometimes laboratory roles) in the New Dance in showing the CDT can write and form in which to move, and this could be said to be the reason alone of the company's acquaintance with "meaning" and "Moving".

The little concept is a dangerous one in untrained hands because if not defined in relation to life very real one would see the abolition of all dance companies and the square in the mean society of a deeper comprehension of moving. Dance would cease to be an art form and more a basic component of life. As in the New Dance where audiences immediately back on themselves. Racing them to associate objects, spaces and movements in their own heads.

It is a trend in art that reduces theatres and establishments to mere comfortable boxes, church halls and city squares. It is also a trend that does people no justice. A life of them do and consequently the New Dance is very much a minority interest, but is apparently very happy being such. Its myriad splinter groups and solitary performers now their clients with a certain apprehension due to the future Press oligopoly groups. Anyway, more of this crap will come in and out.

The CDT attitude is not as timid as that of the Dance Exchange but is very clear there is however an unbroken tradition there in the roots. Probably the most representative piece in the CDT repertoire that I know of at present is *Star! Work* formulated for the company by Russell Dennis with the assistance of seven American New Dance choreographers. Each of these composed a short phrase of free "solos," each a short living an approximation of a dance phrase or enhancement within a certain time span of the old classical ones. These music are related and punctuated throughout the dance and between the dances not in the "independence" manner of Cunningham but in a sense severely situated why each dance having to be aware of and dependent on the other.

What it will amounts to, for the sake of argument is an exercise in social or domestic choreography. Such qualities as speed, dance flow and relation being created by the dancers as the, one, changing and shifting author itself and within each progressive performance. It is all danced in silence and takes a careful and sustained concentration from the audience to follow the idea. In the end it has the effect of a Circumlocution applied to the human body in spite a theatrical X-ray applied to the tiny silhouettes of gesture placement and form.

It is almost beyond the limit of literary analysis of course, what can probably be supplied is a bit of background information: a navigation chart. If you will, but with this form of dance, probably more than any other form of theatre, it is the audience that does the work.

Exciting Bolshoi, mixed Fidelio, well matured Herring

This year's summer holiday season at the Sydney Opera House was a very low key affair all round, with four revivals out of the six programmes presented, and only one semi-staged production, a concert hall version of Beethoven's *Fidelio*. The most exciting and interesting operatic experience of the first half of the season was provided by the four concerts, in part semi-staged, by seven singing stars of the Bolshoi Opera performing excerpts from a fascinating array of Russian operas, most of them little known outside the Soviet Union.

This was a genial evening, presented off beat, even as a largely informal open-air company. Many of the voices were far from good at any such of the major art there had a rather dour, howeverous manner of mould about all which could only reinforce the popular image of the somewhat doleful colourless Sov. But there was a tribal instinct of exuberant glee or white on and off colouring with unvoiced sotto — no concern that a high appropriate stage action and a ridiculous of truly perverse prop, and sometimes a preoccupation on an outshining score re-confirms the mood of the moment.

Russia, understandably being a closed book, to most Western opera goers, the demands of learning possible Italian, French, German and English stretching class to the limit is not surprising that there are no more than three composed (Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and Mussorgsky) and four operas (Eugen Onegin, *The Queen of Spades*, *War and Peace* and *Boris Godunov*) in the Russian repertoire which receive anything like regular exposure in the West. Problems of translation obviously will leave very large in the way of international performance of new works, and Russians

Russia also being one of the more unreliably mixed of languages, full of non-vowels, legal vowels and mixed, non-pervasive consonants, it was a singularly unusual if slightly unnerving experience to sit through an entire evening of gluttony as it were, and slightly easier missed certain rendered off but survival because of one's utter inexperience. In future there must remain, even really outstanding operas loses most ease, over a few years of performance going, in comparison of only sufficiently a good many snippets of German, French and Italian, and it is a particular pity that those who avoided such concern, despite even of such rudimentary aids to understanding, were not given more adequate explanatory material in the printed programme.

Mostly of course they should have had bilingual texts of each excerpt as it was they generally at best a brief summary of the situation and suggestion and sometimes they didn't even get that. And to make it worse the house lighting level was as low between acts it was impossible to read even what was there without the aid of a torch or the related theme of a cigarette lighter.

The highlight of the semi-staged scenes, as these contours came right before interval, with an exquisite excerpt from Act III of Mussorgsky's *Pique Dame* Michael Mordov played the title role, bass Boris Mironov (yes a chapter of Kibei Kostylev), and soprano Lyudmila Kuznetsova (an equally tragic role) Olyar all were excellent and the music, and drama flowed with sufficient clarity so the language barrier didn't matter.

There was a mad lassitude in the scene from Tchaikovsky's *Domestic* sung by Kuznetsova and soprano Nina Poltava. Extracts from no less than six of Tchaikovsky's ten operas were heard in this concert, collectively presenting an important side of his musical personality much more effectively than it is usually heard in the West.

Conversely where the soloists were engaged in a more or less more Dennis Ariza when the actress lit put flowers on her father's grave. The music was unconvincing probably the whole issue would be more than a little tedious, but the particular energy exhibited the likes of the issue with the chance of the recognition of a cold front!

Invariably there were excerpts from *Boris Godunov* and *Eugen Onegin* due to their original scope, though I found Mironov's performance of *Eugen's* act from *War and Peace* less powerful and rhythmic than Boris Wavrin Smith in the production which opened the Sydney Opera House in 1973. I suspect the part of Kuznetsova too high for a baritone like Mironov. The young soprano Alexander Vampiloff, who sang Oleg in the two excerpts from that opera included in the first half came back in the second to dazzle with his vocal skill and sheer showmanship in a solo bracket of three and in my book he, and Mironov and the mezzo-soprano Nata Tonello, who sang a matrilineal pair of arias, by Ljubko and Monastyrsky near the end of the evening, were the most convincingly rewarding of these Russians to hear in.

Appropriately perhaps, the concert concluded with a fantastically bucolical duet from Tchaikovsky's *Domestic* sung by Kuznetsova and soprano Nina Poltava. Extracts from no less than six of Tchaikovsky's ten operas were heard in this concert, collectively presenting an important side of his musical personality much more effectively than it is usually heard in the West.

One must also give a good deal of the credit for the success of this evening to the producer Oleg Mordov, who kept things moving



Boris Godunov (Mrs. Mordovskaya); Anna German (Vicar) and Elizabeth Farrell (Lady Balaustine) in the ACT's *Albert Herring*
Photo: Bruce Giese



Natalia Kuznetsova and Lyudmila Kuznetsova in *Scenes of the Bolshoi Opera*.
Photo: Bruce Giese

David Gyger

smoothly and efficiently so that what was indeed a long night in the theatre seldom seemed so. And of course conductor Paul Maseroff, who coaxed some very authentic-sounding Russian sounds from the Australian Sydney Orchestra and the orchestra itself for responding to him and the Balalaika singers with such enthusiasm.

The concert hall *Fidèle*, produced by friend Bevlock and designed by Alan Lee, was a very much less usual one of those disconcerting angles at the theatre when one is alternately cocked and disoriented, appalled and fascinated. The opening performance was extremely uncluttered in orchestral detail; there were musically words better by the time I returned to hear the next last one.

It will have emerged wereby Carl Pelegi Ciliax is a conductor of such a deeply Germanic work as *Fidèle* just as I have considerable reservations about the work itself. Seen as a bitterly political tract about freedom and tyranny, it makes perfect sense as a dramatic entity, or a story about the triumph of mutual devotions and fidelity over evil; it is a good deal more worrying. The emotions and the images are remote and heroic, and cannot sustain. The plot develops with lightning speed in passages of either often abridged dialogue, then everyone stands about, waiting in the spot for an ensemble of commands on the present state of dramatic play. The final scene is just about passable so, with everyone standing about and regarding at the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil.

Properly, according to Bevlock's original *Fidèle*, the entire first act is the predominance phase in the prison courtyard. It was Bevlock who developed it into the two scenes which are more conveniently seen on stage today; both unusually pace the halves of the concert hall *as though*. The dramatic coming and going which accompanies the first scene, the domestic warmth of Rocco's kitchen is replaced by a vast, forbidding passageway lit by what are apparently wireless posts encircled with dangling blood-stained macerates which Bevlock is required to scrub with a soft brush at the particularly hideous stage of the proceedings.

The conceit of the prisoners has less dramatic effect than I would have thought possible, one of the great directorial insights of all opera is building away, with none of the prisoners, shambling out of a sprawling lair in the stage centre stage as if emanating a malignant emanation, and others letting themselves out through their already vacuous stomachs, never further downstage. Surely Dr Faustus of the *opers* would have had the scalp of not the very head itself of any polter responsible enough to be called on security.

The dramatic sense is more effective as to stage, though Roche really should now be required to dig a hole with a pick in an already vacuous stage floor in full view of the audience, far better to get him behind some kind of



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banner, as was done in the last production, so he can readily appear in his various disguises a grave.

But the musical rewards of the final scene swept past about all one's reservations about the *Prater*. Even on opening night, it was very good; by the end of the season, it was quite striking. Both the chorus and the orchestra, revelling in the open accounts of the concert hall, were making sugar-syrupish use of some of its bewitching musicality, never before have I heard them perform better on a musical level.

The seasons were largely new, this season, at Australian Opera. *Fafhrd* performances (Bischoff, Dr Donald Shanks) *Bucco* (Peter) were magnificently told, while, John Shaw's *Puritans* (good form) and Robert Allmann's *Dion* (*Perrault*) superbly done. I had not seen any of them in the relevant roles before.

Aaron Avniel was an excellent *Jacques*, and Gwyneth Jones an equally excellent *Marteline*. It is hard to accept such a deeply feminine woman as Marilyn Richardson in a prima role such as *Petite Merveille*, and the part does not really suit her vocally either, but she forced me into a willing suspension of disbelief as *Perle* ever progressed and she gradually revealed the vocalistic inner strength of the character she was portraying.

And Donald Smith, making his debut as *Pierrotin*, was either too fatuous at opening, though the improvement in his performance during the run was quite dramatic. It was finally a far better performance than I had dared expect from a man so rightly remembered for a bad singed at the *Venice Presse* Institute.

Smith suffered horribly, in this *Fafhrd*, from just about the only blemish in the effectiveness of William Alcott's lighting. lying flat on his back with a right fitting costume to start with, his obviously well fed form could hardly pretend to be emaciated, and he looked absolutely like the scrawny tykes on the beach in front of *Deschamps*.

the lighting, from a simple grid suspended over the performing area, was excellent — from the blood red pools at the beginning, representing just that, to the diagonal shafts of light down the stairs to the dresses to the final moments of celebration when the house lights came nearly up to full strength, really shaping the audience until night, were the proceedings at stage.

This year's *Albert Herring*, which opened the winter season on a very low key note, was a well-entitled version of the *Herring* that has been in the Australian Opera repertory since the 1950s current season, always with George Evari as the title role. Oddly enough, perhaps the great improvement in this year's production was in Evari's performance itself.

Albert is a foolish part, one of the impossible to cast effectively because he must have the vocal maturity no sing a tag, not always easy, nor yet be able to portray convincingly an adolescent innocent who suddenly, during the course of the opera, develops into much rougher. He is all but forced to turn off with, and has to carry the even other end of the spectrum in *King of the May* and the party which follows, before he can take on a sensible young man. He is hampered with a particularly ugly attack of the bassoon as a final indulgence even when he has dons the tenorine faced with men that is no release his inhibition and lead directly to his emancipation.

It takes great skill to maintain any sort of credibility of character through all this and Evari managed it beautifully the time round. In it, he was helped on and by John Pringle's *Sad* the character and his slightly progressive girlfriend Nancy (joined this year by Jennifer Birmingham), are the catalysts who provide Albert's deluge of indecision.

Pringle, who was making his debut in the only second in a real singing career in the burlesque interests in the party than Lynette Tetrazzini,

who played the rôle in this production, and thus lent greater impact to the party scene by finding the sort that and swaying from side to side. Albert's think the performance, perhaps caught with the greater depth of Evari's penetration into the character of Albert, finally brought the *Herring* in the decline path of its performance form to date.

Several of the cast entries were played by the same performers as before, with refinements in Alfred here and there. Although Bruce was again Miss Woodcock the school teacher, increasing her way through the proceedings more often than not accompanied by a flitting figure, John Germann was a well-matured but slightly raw voice Robert had an otherwise promising manner. Neil Warneford, a suitably will refined and slightly stern policeman. Rhoda Renshaw a little more sympathetic Miss Herring than before, presumably intentionally so under the guiding hand of resident producer Eric Neudach than under the original producer, John Cox.

Alexander Mackie was an excellent new Harry and Heather Begg an equally effective housekeeper as Lesley Bowler, if in a slightly less adventurous way. Elizabeth Farnell worked very hard at being an effective Lucy Bellow but lacked something of the mysterious condescension literally caused by Nance Grey in the same role previously.

Still it was an excellent revival of a piece which merits growing one with repetition, as in the case with all good works of art, and particularly operas in a slightly undramatic show, such as *Herring* will be to many opera goers today. For bringing it off superbly over again conductor William Reid and his small band of instrumentalists from the Queensland Symphony Orchestra deserve the highest credit — even if *Herring* was a rather too low key tourist entry for this year's summer holiday season at the Sydney Opera House.

The ACO's *Fafhrd*

Photo: William Meekay

Aus Shorts on Unemployment

Harry Carr and Ray Pritchard in *Dated Out*Frank Mackie in *Island Shivers*

A clutch of short films by Australian filmmakers on the subject of unemployment and the dole as they affect young people earned public recognition at the Sydney Film-makers' Competition Ltd in Sydney, and I saw four of them there. They are *Dated Out*, *Pretty Vacant Collective* colour, 23 minutes; *Play* (by Brendon Strelak colour, 29 mins); *Island Shivers* (by Alan, 6 and 13 mins); *Island Shivers* (by Tim Woolley, colour, 11 mins); *Nothing's Never Enough* (Kamal Praha, 6 and 20 mins) and *A Touch of the Terrible*, *Find Bull* (color, 10 mins). The last last were not available.

I hope they all got a showing, either in cinemas or on the television screen, because they have something unique and they say it in various tones of voice. One of the more remarkable several qualities is the light touch the half-explained thought, the very commented, the glowing blue and the playful banter that may become famous. The film that comes closest in providing a feel for the topic is *Dated Out*. Just as it is the most familiar, it is also the most

unusual.

Dated Out was started as a youth project a place that can cover anything from communal gardening to just playing. Maths through last year a youth worker or worker with youth employed by the Localbody is a subset of Sydney Council and funded by the NSW Department of Youth and Community Services initiated an examination of unemployment in the area.

With the help of a subsidy offered by the Commonwealth Employment Services and a recent graduate of the Film and Television School, Gill Lally, six young unemployed people set about teaching other young unemployed people with a budget of \$1000 how to use film and cameras, sound equipment etc. Three young filmmakers came in to help and the film as far as I can make out was a test-off. Whether the film made by the Pretty Vacant Collective became more important than the Collective's instantiation of the game taking over the screen, *Burnout* is anybody's guess. In

any case it is an engaging, cheerful film which also happens to say a lot of things about what it is like to play and not be paid. Though, one hardly needs reminders to say able to offer otherwise.

Play (Ray) is about the kind of young people who on the one hand distinguished by lack of definable purpose don't mind being out of work as long as they can live fairly well and keep out of range of the police. They are upstarts but quite criminal. They corroborate each other. They are deeply into going but nevertheless able to change from outsiders. They live on the fringes along a day's tramping trail and there's usually some sailing goofily stored in front of a television set. *Play* (Ray) is well made looks very good and is a clear delineation of a certain sort of life which is not being an excuse, if only in the most superficial way, and has no point but. As with *Island Shivers*, the sound recording falls off when it comes to dialogue.

Island Shivers is a good light love story unashamedly told in black and white with three totally believable people. The principal character is Shale, a long-haired, strongly built youth with an acne pimpled face who comes, from the country in the city to try for a job. He turns up at a motel that in the evident disarray of the man's garb, drops on the sofa spreads himself on telephone boxes applying for jobs, smokes himself with a motor bike good enough to race at amateur level and takes off when his date changes at last turns up on the road again. A cool truck service, sad but not hopeless story very well told.

Island Shivers is a very lively, splendidly photographed film about a ladified of going men working at the Darling Island railway yards yards in Sydney, and the truck-hauling mercenaries, which have to be moved as fast as possible over a mass of tracks. To do this the young men have to locate their masters working them in successive work shifts. The tasks are top and dangerous. The new comers who take the job gets a short lesson in what to do and how to do it, then gets a gang ("Congratulations you're a shifter"), says the boss, "Never give up."

One of the boys remarks: "You don't know what you're doing, but you do it. They'll let you break the rules in an the train out and take no notice until something goes wrong. Then you're in it, on the line."

The film patently relishes well the split-second coming and the risks that have to be taken on set, does as well as film and the musical sound track from Terry Whitehead sound fine for action that is always exciting, and often funny.



Money Movers — Bloody but worthy.

The Money Movers has a lot going for it — a good, well-judged plot, muscular casting, authentic flavours of the very, destructive land practices so expertly by Australian several notable performances from unscripted veterans and an evocative soundtrack.

It also has too much blood. The sight of the first action-cum-circus human comedy is so utterly shocking that in the first scene, in conclusion to a welter of hacking codes no man is spared across the continent claimed to oblige us to subject this repugnant class bonanza and share a load of ridiculous amazement. This is the actually damaging reach of its most intended overall.

You have only an or an audience splitting in sides in a lunge for film, because the script is such a patchy of aggression and violence to realize that audiences may do the same during the final third of *The Money Movers*. When the blood is not actually being spilt for the bones being mashed together the film scripted and directed by Bruce Beresford and produced by Max Curnell for the South Australian Film Corporation with additional financial support from the NSW Film Corporation, is consistently abhorring. It is about the planning development and carrying out of a \$30 million bank robbery by people most qualified to do it — the staff at a security firm.

The plot is based on a novel of the same name by Dennis Maclean, who was for a long time head of his own industrial security company. So the detail is right, and in the detail of the lifting of \$20 million in notes which upsets the film so fascinating. The other plus and a considerable plus is in the director's control of those details. The action is necessarily carried out in claustrophobic, cluttered surroundings and the action hardly ever get out of the last mentioned, and doesn't try. Even when the company drivers are out on the road the lifting of huge strong boxes confined to tight, atmospheric garretted with poms and bunches of keys and further encased in mobile hot metal pensum effectively ringing the nerves.

Bruce Beresford is a director who has proved he can do many things well. He may not always like what he has to put his hand on, but the recent premonitory — *The Bigga Macumba Film*, *Don't Party*, *The Gathering* of *Wishful now*, *The Money Movers*, with Rosalieoshaw and in his next up *Blowout* the taken seems to be for heraldic goals, rather than of others, goals of boozey porno parts of schoolgirls with the latter and/or goals of amateur and professional criminals as in *The Money Movers*. He has a great ear for the language of special groups and a great eye for their movements. For instance, the more meetings in *The Money Movers* have



Ed Devereux lands a punch on actress Anna Friel in *The Money Movers*

splendid authenticity

He is less adept with the intimate scenes. In fact the relationship between Eric Jackson (Terence Stamp) and his wife Sharon (Dawn French) half defined and the world in their country cottage which is meant to encapsulate that relationship is expressed extremely as if the director wanted to get rid of the way in such as possible and get on with the otherwise-ness. As Mr Waterbrook, and at Alcock (Casperfield), "Other things are all very well in their way but give me blood."

He does better with an amorous encounter between Candy (Reynald), a company spy, and Tiny (Beverley) an insurance spy.

Bruce Beresford has given performances from some of his veteran actors that reflect of the Crawford estate series and find a hard to believe. It must be, but the men are always there just struggling to get out by means of a forced script and director. Among these who attempt are Charles Tingwell (who perhaps should be allowed to forget the apertures

"Bad") Ed Devereux, and Lucy Galt in the role respectively of Meyer Horwitz the unctuous union king, Martin the manager who drives for Disney's Bonney, and Conway the manager of the counting house where millions of dollars are stored in big envelopes before being shipped to the industrial clients.

It isn't them with the peculiar quality of selling, surveying, coddling and thought process without making the small facts, and Terence Stamp's ectopic top to toe. Others who are bloody, bold and robust just, certainly Monday in a hairdresser and Ray Marshall who calls stop-work messages to Galactic robbery entrepreneurs. Alan Cudlitz as Harry the best policeman with good connections in the force and out of it, and Huw Pritchard Griffiths, whose police career in Britain was derailed, are given a couple of them, by a touch of queen bee.

As such almost all local films today, as nothing is inherently perfect, nor does the imaginative cinema work and lighting of the ubiquitous Don McAlpine.

The Myth of the Troubadour



These people are as likely as anyone else, perhaps like us, to mislead the significance and consequences of the genre of musical art that we call troubadour song. The notion that there was a being called a troubadour who looked like a wandering monk and set off along the dusty roads of medieval Europe with his lute singing over the shoulder is so widespread that it may be forgotten to urge its revision. There were, no doubt, wandering monks and, indeed, wandering entertainers of all kinds in the period. Students of the subject assure us, however, that they were not troubadours. For this matter, the use of the word troubadour to denote a professional calling or status is in the imaginary phase. 'I am a troubadour' I seem to have been unknown.

There was a genre of troubadour song and, later, of trouvere song, but these words were by no means used universally or consistently. We are probably more accurate in historical terms if we simply refer to the songs normally described as being troubadour songs or trouvere songs simply as medieval songs. The labels are useful, however, in that they identify for us in a tidy sort of way the kind of songs produced by and for a special kind of society that flourished in the Provincialisation of the 11th and 12th centuries and, somewhat later and differently, in northern France.

The person who makes troubadour songs would part of one of the most highly developed of European societies of the last thousand years and

was much more likely to be an aristocratic dispenser of power, status or even king or a person given similar powers, the privilege of aristocratic society under their service, so underprivileged as a wandering monk. Which is not to say that wandering monks or even wandering entertainers never performed troubadour songs, merely that they need to be distinguished from the makers of those songs. There is some evidence, in fact, that in all a person who was admitted to the hospitable company of those who sang troubadour songs, a master, a papa or a preceptor, was in reality an aristocrat as could be imagined.

I must say that if anyone had asked me a few years ago which professional composer of my time was likely to get the title of 'african' confined I would have named Michael Praetorius as a likely candidate. Now I suspect it is trying to live the myth of the troubadour, travelling with a lute, singing songs, presenting long programmes of songs of all types and periods and cultures of himself and his acquaintances as modern troubadours. Someone must have been telling this is thing or two as the present state of affairs make his own lively curiosity and natural musicianship have been complemented by a deeper exploration of tradition.

For whatever reason Michael now records *The Dawn of Romance* (HMV CSD 1715). This is one of the most satisfying and balanced introductions to troubadour and trouvère song on a single disc. I am inclined to think it may be intended as the record of the moment. But has absolute recent practice in decking out the unperfected nobodies in their surviving form with musicalized pretences and affectations and at every possible and chosen convenience. No one is in a position to say this is exactly how the songs would have been performed by the historical evidence such as it is. Details of forces were such sort of bold and lively reconstructions rather than a tame reading. For unaccompanied monophony performance this does not go beyond the practice naturally employed by the most highly regarded performers of early music.

He own solo singer has character and has unusual exaggerations and the vocal instrumental result is not only musically pleasing a product of the natural musical good sense. I mention earlier, but also as plausible, as any other performance of this music now available. But such is some of the better known songs and songs very few of them however accorded as satisfactorily as they are here and goes no recent roles which prove it needed that the voices of the disc are no happy accident. He concentrates on songs of low bass parts enough variety to reveal us that country life was only one of the subjects, even if

it was the most influential of the subjects chosen by the writers of troubadour and trouvère song.

A set of records magnificently produced by the late David Munrow and his Early Music Ensemble of London for EMI and now reissued by the World Record Club at £10.95 £1.30 post might seem from its title *The Art of Courtly Love* to be dealing with much the same repertoire as Praetorius did in his day. The Munrows often are in fact complementary and take up the story, of course using as the occasion immediately following the troubadour and trouvère periods.

The we begin with a disc almost entirely devoted to the work of the 14th century composer and poet Guillaume de Machaut who was not only a composer in the extremely wrought polyphonic style of the time but also a person who sought consciously to serve, to continue the tradition of the troubadour song by writing troubadour songs in medieval forms. As J. F. Popley Machaut is represented here by the polyphony, pieces which seem to us now to represent 14th century room music at its most exuberant.

The second record of the set is devoted on music from the 14th century French culture music which reminds us in its elaborateness and daring not to make the music of Machaut that music has been proceeding on any constant evolutionary plan in the last thousand years is that the music of people in earlier centuries was relatively simple and slow because they lived a long time ago. Quite a deal of the music was unstruck as interval complexity and various procedures until the 20th century and it may well be that says a fine century composed in desperation to understand the sophisticated art music of that unscrupulous time.

The sheet disc brings us into a basis of relating order the classical style as a fine series of the music written by two of the greatest masters of music, Dufay and Batchelor, during the period of the great Burgundian dukes in the 15th century. Melody of — of our standards — clarity distinction through not necessarily any the better for that leads us securely into the poised music world of 15th century musical art. Does it represent the young Melchior Agricola the hero of the Renaissance? The truth is probably that it contains something of both. Munrow and his performers present all of the music in excellent performances in conformity with the latest opinions on style.

Discussions that used to be conducted when plays required music makes that the 15th century will find considerably that these does not only good for learning in themselves but also a valuable part for three centuries of European history.

R



Myths and National Identity

Ray Lawler *The Doll Trilogy* (Kingsley Press)
Patrick White *Big Toys* (Currency Press)
*Based by Albee: *Blues Come Down Near Me Talking To You** (University of Queensland Press)
Liam Ringer *Edited by Alison Sayers* (J.D. and Gillen Plays) (University of Queensland Press)



A nation needs myths and a sense of its continuity and drama can provide them. In exploring the National Character, the myth becomes one of the guiding principles of Australian drama. Unfortunately exploring national myths often turns into cliché-ridden national defenses and confirming national prejudices. The new middle-class educated men of Oliver in the plays of the last sixteen or so years seem to drop off the old blocks as the playwrights were delighted to note.

Susanna of the *Susannah Doll* in 1979 seemed genuinely to be exploring and testing an old myth. It brought two learned Australian business-interpreters up into the shells of Carson and formal dress to face the realities of urban Australian life. They fail. (Typically, and unfairly, as Anne Summers has pointed out, the Dream was expressed through their women or at least Oliver. The men could stagger back to the bush morally unscathed but Oliver was the one who was destroyed.) The confrontation between the image of Australian life represented by Ross and Barney and the reality of living in a modern city often gave the play much of its original power.

Reading *The Doll Trilogy*, there is an odd comparison. In the 1970s here is Ray Lawler

going back and testing the old, already successfully defeated myth still further. The result being already established in the *Doll* is become a strongly revisionist version. In his introduction to the plays John Semper is sceptical of the idea that any about could have brought audiences to see the whole trilogy, and maybe rightly, but I certainly would have done it.

The *Doll* certainly remains one of the best Australian plays and, if Ed Sayers and Oliver Ziering are worthy comparisons for it, they must play only and play slightly self-consciously knowing the *Doll*. There are scenes which are obviously setting up the famous stories and images in the later — the dolls themselves, the "pink city babies," Bobbie Oliver's dream of the dolls and so on. Another distancing effect is that Ross and Barney do not emerge upon acquaintance. Their initial arrogant, snooty, narrow minded assumption of superiority is part of the myth which Lawler is exploring, and (presumably) questioning but over these plays it gets a little weary. And again there is that roguish, celebrating quality about it — a suggestion that they are just caught in another little toy, like Norm and Don and Mal and the rest of those others who, if left, to run the play might, as Patrick White suggests about another different character, let the world end when around they can't play with them any more.

Patrick White is called, on the cover of *Big Toys* "a revisionist icon of the national heart." It is easier to imply that Ross & Barney have vacuous hearts or that the Australians they represent had a completely vacuous heart, but *Big Toys* is refreshingly rich and concerned after the *Doll*. Despite its tone that such a strong defense of the spot which makes man in us about his superiority should take the form of such a broad, brilliant comedy of manners and a wise probably the apparent contradiction which caused disappointment, this reviewer included, when the play first appeared.

It is hard to see the above argument standing but it's very subtle. Reader and Meg Rosenthal play with their big toys just as cerebral residents present the covers the Labor Party. The Old Tote Thatched and try to reduce a good union man, Terry, before interrogating them and giving up the good fight. They were the heart but it is implied or hoped that he will be the way.

Throughout there is an almost impulsive feeling of the value in the human spirit, and a generalised reverence — as Bobbie says, "Don't let the tourists win." The acting sense of loss and emptiness which May feels when she moves out through the processes of the Sydney skyline into the black area of void beyond is lost to the audience and reader, just as in Styne's opening, the black norwestern later down on us

all. Perhaps a response to the play is determined by how much you like the big toys yourself — which may not make a great potential warning for the audience at the Old Tote in 1977. But anyone who had doubts then should at least now take the opportunity to re-examine.

It is impossible not to read the script without fearing the characters as Kate Pageant, Arthur Dignam and Max Collier — for whom it was apparently written. More than most published plays, this is a record of a production. There are many small "theatrical notes," from Ian Sharman alone, throughout the time explaining how certain moments were staged or how certain lines were delivered. The editor is of a very private, almost fussy, style produced by a small group of people after aid by a master.

In the company of Lawler and White other Australian plays are bound to seem less significant, which is a pity because an anthology like *Carry On You Hear Me Talking To You* edited by Alison Sayers has some fine theatrical writing in it and will be much more useful to people looking for good playable Australian material. It is a collection of eight short act plays in different styles, which demonstrate that we have come a long way since the old antiquities of short plays for amateur theatrical societies. Robert Lend's *Balance of Personality* particularly shows a vivid theatrical imagination and should prove if again such plays were needed, that you don't need to be serious to be serious.

Funny Stanger's J.D. and other Plays also edited by Alison Sayers is probably more of historical interest. At a time when it was not so timely as it is now Liam Ringer began collecting, editing, producing, writing about and writing Australian plays, and this volume is a fitting memorial. His plays, however stated, though not in it explicitly that companies will now want to take them up. They have the slightly patentning ring taking. Significantly or for the audience again characteristic song of the old comedies writing of the mid-century before there were any professional theatres to write for in AD and the presence for "bowdler" character quite hardly.

Theatre Australia

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GUIDE**A.C.T.****CANBERRA OPERA (02) 6248**

Opera in the Schools Series

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Premiere: Theater Company/Claire Higgins Encounters

The English Connection

The Grand Tour 20 March (box office 21 March)

SOUND and SOUND 21 March

The Faerie Quee and Peter 22 March (box office 22 March)

PLATTHORN (02) 7600

Cantares Performance Society

The Sound of Music by Rogers and Hammerstein. Various venues 1 to 10 March

THEATRE (02) 4222

Children's Repertory

Dawn Park Smith and Wayne Pam Goss. Director, Anne Godfrey Smith. 1 to 31 March. Wednesdays to Saturdays

For enquires contact Margarette Wallis on 49-1782

NEW SOUTH WALES**ATLANTIS COMPANY (02) 5070**

Othello by William Shakespeare. Phone theatre for production details

ARTS COUNCIL OF NSW (02) 6111

Fame, Fortune, Love, Death, Satire and Misadventure. Preb School Years Double, Alan Head, John Carter, Dale Woodward. Box Office: Dance Concert Studio Ball

AUSTRALIAN BALLET

Opera Theatre, City Recital Hall and Capitol Theatre 23 March to Sat 28 March

AUSTRALIAN OPERA (02) 2808Opera Theatre: *Mastersingers of Nuremberg* by Wagner. 1, 3 March at 8pm. *Faust* by J.S. and *Der Rosenkavalier* by Wagner 2, 7, 10 March 1.30pm, Sat 11 March 1.30pm. Concert Hall: *Stars Unite* 2 March 7.30pm. *Alceste* by Wagner 29 March with ABC concert version in English**ENSEMBLE THEATRE (02) 5477***Last of the Red Hot Lovers* by Neil Simon. Director, Jon Irving, with Brenda Collings, Maggie Deane, Liz Harris, Len Keayman, Constance at the Studio. Box office 02-94877 for details**FRANK STRAYHORN BULL (02) 5010***Born in the USA* (Touring). Director, George Corden with Ned Brophy, Barbara Wyman, Garth Maitland, Helen Lawrence and Ned Bryson**GENESIAH THEATRE (02) 5623***The Apartment* by Franca Mancini. Director, Raymond Karschow**HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02) 5411**
Second Floor, Regent Street Circular Quay**KIRRABILLI FISH THEATRE (02) 1415***The Jungle Book* by Paul Chahin. Francis Ward and Richardson Young**LIPS CURRIE PRESENTATIONS (02) 5679**

Mister Anderson Traditional bush audience roles, primary and secondary schools in NW Hunter, W and Nepean districts. Modern Stage Theatre touring schools, primary and secondary schools in Sydney metropolitan areas. To 23 March

MARIAN STREET THEATRE (02) 5161*The Merry Widow* by Irak Shostak. Director, Peter Mordor with John Bruce, Philip Harvey, Brandon Burke, Tom McCarthy, Louise Le May and Helen Lee. To 31 March. *Perfume Table* by Alan Ayckbourn. From 30 March**MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (02) 1681**

Puppet Power NSW Schools Tour, director, Barbara Brabazon

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (02) 5122

Love in the Dark written and directed by Stanley Webb, with Ben Hadfield, Alan White, Karen Johnson and Diane Cotes

MUSICA LOFT THEATRE (02) 6182*On Your Own* written by Hilary Sanderson. John McElroy and Peggy Morrison. Director, William Orr**NEW THEATRE (02) 5489***Andy Warhol* Director, Dick Diamond. Friday Sat 2am continuing**PENINSULA THEATRE (02) 5009 5003***Midsummer's Eve* by Alan Bass. Director, Ross Webster. To 4 March*Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare. Director, John Bell, with Angela Potts, Mel Gibson, Cora Parry and Kerry Walker. From 16 MarchCommissario Montalbano: *Last Half Hour* by Hechtman. William Hecht, producer, director, Gordon Biersch, with Bruce Mylne. To 10 March

The diamond from the dark from the writings of Henry Lawson. Director, Rodney Foster with Robyn Banister. From 17 March

Q THEATRE (02) 511510*Now the Other Half Lives* by Alan Ayckbourn. Director, Arthur Dicks, with Bill Coxon, Alan Herli, Kevin Jackson and Bobbi Davis. Preview 1, 25 March. Performances from 26 March**SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE**

Recording Hall (Kleenex Energy Dance Co 21-30 March)

SYDNEY PLAYERS (02) 1761

153 George Street, Glebe

Peter Ingoldsby: *The Birthday Party*, *The Homecoming*, *Off Time* and *The Dynes Winter* or *Autumn at Night*. 14 February 1, 18 March. Late Night Show: Selections of Peter's plays, review sketches, narrative biography and his life plus *It's a Man's World* 11 April**SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (02) 1946**

Free drama workshops on Sun and Sunn 10.30am

including playbills, music, dance, sculpture, pottery, audio and video

SEYMOUR CENTRE (02) 9255York Theatre: *The Englishman* by William Douglas Home, director, George Ogden, with Gavan Webber, John McCullum and Frank Thring

Fevered Prospect at the Old Vic. Great English Ensemble. Presented by Prospect Theatre Company with David Jacobs, Timothy West, Ian Rix and Julian Glover. To 17 March

STATE THEATRE COMPANY INTERIM PRINCIPAL (02) 899-9123

Drama Theatre, Open Stage

The Lady of the Camellias by Dumas Pâris adapted by Louis Stevens and Ross Chapman with Kate Fagan, Pauline Tietz, Karen Arthur, Duncan To. 24 March**THEATRE TOTAL (02) 611111***The Red Solder* (Touring) by Ben Taverner, director, Lindsay Addison with Rachel Roberts and Wallace Eaton. To 4 March. *An Evening with Oscar* 18, 19 March*Deathtrap* by Terence Rattigan. Director Michael Hainsworth with Robyn Nevin and Diana Ober. From 19 March**200 PLAYSHOUSE (02) 9204***Heads to the Jacks* (Touring) John Hirsch with the 200 players. Presented by 200 Plays in association with the ABC Drama School. Children's play for only \$10. From 19 March

For enquires contact Cindy Baker on 257-1260

QUEENSLAND**ARTS THEATRE (07) 3322***Antiseptics* by Marcello Minetti, director, Jennifer Dohmen. To 24 MarchNightbreath by Linda Peacock, director, Jason Whiting. Open 29 March. *Swimming* 30 March

Swimming 30 (Children's Theatre) by Pauline Potts and Don Bayley, director, Eric Hauff. Open 1 March

BRISBANE ACTORS COMPANY (07) 321735

Stephen (based on Melville), director, David Chisholm, with Michael McCaffery, Bill Weston, Mac Hamilton, Steve Hamilton, Penny Wright. To 30 March

CAMERATA (07) 5510*The Puffin* by Angus Brewster, director, Fred Weston, with Brian Ragg and Dorothy Wood. From 1 March**HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (07) 2777***Bedroom Farce* by Alan Ayckbourn, director, Peter Williams, with Barry Cryer, Pat McDonald, Kenny Miguel, Belinda Giblin and Guy Pease. To 17 MarchAustralian Opera: *Norma* by Bellini, starring René Schubert, conductor, Charles Mignard, Richard Dauphin, designer, Paola Marzocca. From 11 March**QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY (07) 311777**

Brinker Abens by Kenneth Rose, director, John Kruzelik, designer, Fiona Reilly, with Donald MacDonald, Kerry Fraser, John Cryan, Reginald Gillam, Ed Taylor. From 14 March

LA BOITE (16 M)

Jack Sain by John Bradley, director, from 1986 To 1 March

Folks Angels by Ned Cromer, director, Edith Weston, Joanne, David Hall, with Kay Perry, from 20 March

QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL (221 2880)

The Dangers and All That Jazz director, Douglas Hodge, with John Pizzarelli, Eddie Redwine and Greg Rutherford, running from 21 March

For enquires contact Don Borekovic on 369-0678

SOUTH AUSTRALIA**ALICE IN THEATRE (2)**

The Police Commissioner's Grandmother by John Stephen, director, Bill Knapp, 21-23 March

LITTLE PATCH THEATRE at Bakelite TheatreA Span of Yellow Director, Merrin Jones, 1-10 March
The Levels/Peninsula (for 4-6 year olds) 13-14 March**MAYFAIR LIGHT OPERA**

Goodwill Institute Concerts! producer, BM Morris 24 March

Q THEATRE (121 5610)

Under Milkwood by Dylan Thomas, Director, Jon Marshall, 24-31 March

ST JUDES PLAYERS

St Judes Ball, The Diary of Anne Frank director, Italyana, chapter, Jeff Smith, 21-23 March

SA STATE OPERA OF SA (31 6161)

Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss the Younger 12-14 March

SA STATE THEATRE COMPANY (31 5111)

Hamlet by William Shakespeare, director, Peter George, designer, Hugh Colman, with Michael Sherry, Company cast to 3 March, cut version, 4-14 March

American Buffalo by David Mamet, director, Nick Daugh, 29 March-12 April

For enquires contact Chris Johnson on 21 5679

TASMANIA**POLYGYON THEATRICAL COMPANY (13 4369)**at Bellini Restaurant, Battery Point (21 5111)
Old World Banquet running, Rose Joss, a late 18th century version of the Flying Dutch, David and directed by Bob Gay, musical director, Bruce Gossman, From 16 March**TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE (11 7091)**

Playbox Theatre, McLearen, Bob & Vicki director, Peter Wilson, 19 March

The North Wind and the Sun (fable) show, written and directed by Peter Wilson, 10-12 March

THEATRE ROYAL (04 4280)

Casanova's Adventures by Raynor Lynne, director, Peter Williams, with June Soifer, To 3 March

Wish the Lilly Wish with Leonard Taitz, Light Opera Company, New Adress, From 29 March

For enquires contact the editorial office on 04-961-4740

VICTORIA**ALEXANDER THEATRE (341 2010)**

Natal Rose English matinée and 17-18 March, then on tour throughout Victoria. Presented by

the Arts Council of Victoria in conjunction with the Festival of Fools

Measure for Measure by Shakespeare, Alexander Theatre Co, director, Steven Robertson, Last March

ARENA CHILDREN'S THEATRE (21 5661)

Plans in performance Secondary schools Metropolitan and Country CompanyOne

Upper Secondary — Snags by Edward Albee

Designed and directed by Peter Taubach

Lower Secondary — Who Was Who? See Tin

An based on the book of Barbara Bechtel. Directed and designed by Peter Chastain

Company Two

Upper Secondary — Witches by Brian Friel

Designed and directed by Peter Taubach

Lower Secondary — Headmaster and His Fight Against the Discourtesy by Bruce Gray

Designed and directed by Peter Chastain

SCAT — Student Activity Theatre — One

weekender drama experience. Head's Quest by Stephen Walsh

Arts/Student Community Activities

Youth Theatre Group 7.30-10.00 pm

Monday, Women's Theatre Group 7.30-10.00

pm Tuesday-Saturday Morning Classes 9.00

pm (also 4-6 years old), 11.00-1.00 pm 11-15

years old

Mixed Company, Dr Great American Book

Song Musical by Bill Solly and Donald Ward

17 March to 5 May

An Evening with a Composer — Robert Dowd

12 March/13 & 14 March

ARTS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA (229 4334)

Primary Schools Program, Art Making the Grade by Ian Cudlipp, director, John Wrigg

Secondary Schools Program, Modern Music

Theatre with Michael Proctor

Options in SA, Five Funny Folk Tales from the Brothers Grimm. Adapted and directed by David Mackay

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCE GROUP

FROM FACTORY (03 7171 7111)

Punch and I Spies! Mickey & Minnie by John Kani, director, Alan Robertson

Brix Theatre, Beverley, Blackheath, 1-11 March

COMEDY THEATRE (03 4990)

Oscar Hammerstein by Hamilton Deane and

John L. Balderston, director, Robert Helpmann,

set and costumes designed by Edward

Gibney, starring John Waters, Maxi Baillie, David

Reidewald, Leigh Bowery and company

CREATIVE ARTS THEATRE (03 78-0242)

Community based theatre working at schools,

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FOURTH Theatre Restaurant (042 2397)

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tainment with Red Quadrant and company

Shazz! Culverhouse 17 March

HOOPERA THEATRE FOUNDATION

(03 7642) Flyer Theatre, Devonshire

Foxy Trax, Sogni Giusti, Seven

Carson in Wonderland (Music 1-3 March)

Gladness Only by Eve Marwick, director,

Gillian Headland, starring Julie McDiarmid,

Anne Phelan, Betty Robbie, Aaron Morris,

Delyla Kapse and Marilyn Rogers, From 16

March

Upstart Theatre

Davy Love by Tom Stoppard, director, Murray

Capitol, starring Bill Napier, Bill Timpson,

Frank Capra, Amanda Maggs, Paula le

Brett, Robyn Campbell and Shirley Hale, To 3

March

The High and the Mighty Show, starring

Margaret Rosenthal and Bob Hudson, 3-10 March

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (03 2 2011)

Anne, Director, George and Ethel Mervin,

starring Hayes Hunter and Jim Ferguson

Continuing

LAST LAUGH Theatre Restaurant 1409-0291

LA MAMA (03 4999 5626)

The Bright Side written and directed by Barry

Deane, with Jill Foster, Then, Sun To 11

March

Run Away by Robert Keeler, directed by

John Wolf, with Adrienne Golding Brown and

Maggie Miller, From 15 March, Then, See

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

03 4160 0000

Russell St Theatre, Stables by James Saunders,

design, Bruce Mylne, designer, Steve Nalder,

featuring Adam Harvey, Jennifer Higgins, Steven

Chapman and Michael Tolson, To 17 March

Mimesophere by Frank Kallis, adapted,

directed and designed by Steven Berkoff

National Theatre production from 21 March

Afterplay Theatre, Asleep's End by R.C.

Sherriff, director, Mick Roger, designer, Tony

Trotz, featuring Robbie McCracken, Anthony

Hawkins, Ian Holland, and company, To 17

March

Marked by W. Shakespeare, director, John

Sawyer, designer, Tonya McCain, From 21

March

Tragedy production directed by Judith

Alexander's production of new or soon

to appear Australian or overseas plays.

South West class, directed by Stephen

Maguire

Also School Theatre Project, Georges

Eschbahn to 10 March and Country In-

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Victoria State Opera production of The

Ring of Fire, Produced by Robin Lawrence and

costume by Richard Dugay

Glowe Mathematics, director, Peter Williams;

with Sam Salter, From 13 March

PALACE THEATRE (03 2603)

Australian Open production of Puccini's La

Bohème and Verdi's La Traviata, To 24 March

TIKI AND JOHN'S THEATRE LOUNGE (03 1 7541)

With Tiki and John Newman, Myrna Roberts,

Vic Gordon, and guest artists

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (03 5811)

The Pied-Piper — Primary Theatre (please see

above), Starring Yvonne Kenny, Graeme Wall

and Neil Monger

Schools programme — Fairy Tales A Fair Two

Giant's fairy tales adapted to music by Peter

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For entries contact *Lis Connelly* on 291 1711

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CIVIC THEATRE RESTAURANT 1271 1991
Four for Two by Dennis Milley, *Comedy*

DOLPHIN THEATRE 0123 2099

Some Good Food from History, drama by Nicky Ray To 18 March

HARLEM THEATRE 1350 3049

The Man of the World by Congreve, drama
Revised Overture To 18 March

HOLE IN THE WALL 081 24610

Midwives by Alexander Baron, with Robert van Mackelbergh, director Edgar Miles, designer Bill Dowd To 10 March

After Marriage by Tom Stoppard, with Robert van Mackelbergh, director Edgar Miles, designer Bill Dowd To 3 March

Good Moon March by David Alkin, director Colin McCall To 14 March 14 April

NATIONAL THEATRE 032 28000

Playhouse Night and Day by Alan Sillinger, drama, Stephen Barry, designer Sue Kendall, with Horace Blackman To 1 March

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller, director Stephen Barry, with Marlene Mitchell 11 March

OKTAQON THEATRE 021 21898

Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare, National Theatre Co, director Ann Bell, designer Kenway Henderson, with Angela Peacock, Mill Colours To 1 March

REGAL THEATRE 091 15571

House of Paper by Alan Ayckbourn To 10 March

SUNKEN GARDENS 0123 15998

Push and Judy, The Fog Prince, *Street Names*, *The Puppet Man* To 10 March

WA BALLET COMPANY 0123-81888

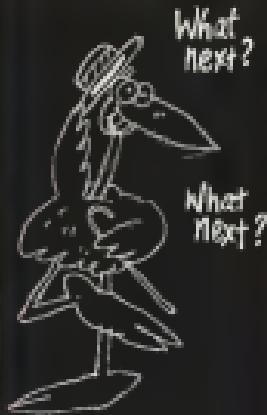
Society Club Production at Karangah Cultural Centre, 18 March

WA OPERA COMPANY 0123-41110

Opera in Cinema at Perth Concert Hall, Conductor, Alan Abbott, 13 March

For entries contact *Jean Andrew* on 299 6879

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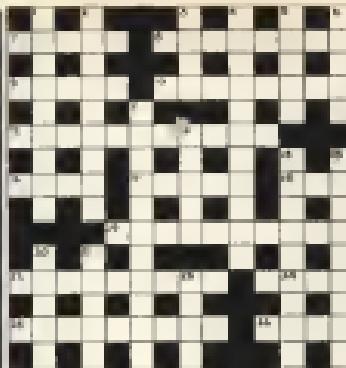
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Name _____

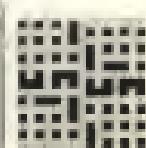
Address _____

Address _____

1. "No name round the North so I'd planned to" (9)
2. "Not as home in the season for growing" (9)
3. "Little Alfred" is completed (9)
4. Dear people with house clothes (9)
5. Blame trees, and include right in achievement (9)
6. Medium not to Pintos (9)
7. "...that segment? What's normal - check with my hair?" (9)
8. Cupid given a ready word (9)
9. Carl and knight meet a fife — with no formation — it's a performance (9)
10. Users track Roman remaining in the South (9)
11. "It over very heavy" I did not (9)
12. I almost (9)
13. "I'm not very honest" I did not (9)
14. "I don't like to teach" (9)
15. Marion, suddenly cheered goes on study to become an expert (9)
16. Chemical powder offered by post, in a certain (9)
17. Continental, once big power (9)
18. "Can Shannen be paid?" (9)

Word 8

1. See *Scenes* discuss 21 country (9)
2. Hole, for Clinton's a very quiet business (9)
3. Back encouragement in the car park (9)
4. Burning, causing a well-worn (9)
5. An explosion in road (9)
6. Give French and the German below (9)
7. Active discussion about sex (9)
8. Least, in order to teach (9)
9. Marion, suddenly cheered goes on study to become an expert (9)
10. Chemical powder offered by post, in a certain (9)
11. Continental, once big power (9)
12. "Can Shannen be paid?" (9)



The first correct entry drawn on March 26th will receive one year's Recroductorship to *T.A.*

Last month's answers,

Last month's winner was Mrs. Marie Willis, Ryde, NSW.

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